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Tossed with
Spicy Chiles

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INTRODUCING

**THE
GOOD TASTE
AWARDS**

The Best of Travel, Food, Drink & Style

Issue 177

La Fin du Monde

Fans of cheese, onion soup and of La Fin du Monde rejoice, here is your ultimate pairing.

Let your taste buds discover a new world with this great recipe uniting the flavors, textures and intensity of sweet caramelized onions, sharp Gruyère cheese and the yeast, spice, and malt notes of our Belgian style triple. It's a smooth rich match made in heaven. Enjoy!



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Ultimate Onion Soup

PREPARATION : 10 MIN | COOKING TIME : 60 MIN | SERVINGS : 6

INGREDIENTS

6 medium onions (2 lbs 1/2) peeled and finely chopped
(2 red, 2 white, 2 Vidalias)
1 green onion chopped finely
1 bottle of La Fin du Monde (750 ml format)
1 garlic clove chopped finely
3 tablespoons of olive oil or butter
½ cup of Porto
½ cup of red wine

4 cups beef broth
1 VERY small pinch of dried thyme
½ teaspoon celery seeds
1 large bay leaf (to be taken out before putting in oven)
Salt, ground pepper to taste
6 French bread slices - 1 cm (1/4 in.) thick
2 cups of grated swiss cheese (Gruyère or Emmental)
1 cup of fresh grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese

PREPARATION

- 1- In a large saucepan, caramelize half the onions at medium/low heat (1 of each color), the green onion and the garlic in the butter or olive oil, stirring often, until mix is a dark golden color (about 20 minutes).
- 2- Deglaze with La Fin du Monde, while scraping bottom of pan. Reduce to half.
- 3- Add broth, Porto, red wine, thyme, celery seeds, bay leaf and leftover onion.
- 4- Preheat oven to 450°F.
- 5- Salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 25 minutes.
- 6- Pour soup into 6 bowls, add a slice of bread over each one and cover with 75 ml (1/3 cup) of Swiss cheese and 1/6 cup of fresh Parmigiano Reggiano.
- 7- Place the bowls on a cooking tray, brown.

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CHAMBLY QUÉBEC CANADA

Getting a closer look at the amazing stone men of Rapa Nui. The airline lost my luggage, so I was stuck with this neon pink shirt for the entire visit. Happily, there are no dress codes for eating on Easter Island.



Baby pineapples are really good. Especially when eaten on one of the planet's most remote islands.

What Is Good Taste?

One of the tastiest things I've ever nibbled on was a tiny pineapple, carved for me by a nice lady near a beach somewhere on Easter Island. The day was hot; the fruit was cold and sweet, its miniature leaves pulled back and held like a popsicle stick. There were, in fact, two ladies on the beach (sisters, I was told) operating identical, competing baby-pineapple stands in an otherwise utterly deserted corner of this most remote Pacific island. Under an unrelenting sun, I ate my fruit and stared in slack-jawed wonderment at the ancient *moai*. The famous stone heads stared impassively back at me, perched at the edge of the vast, endless sea. Everything was amazing. Because taste has as much to do with where you are as what you're eating. Context is everything.

It turns out there is *some* accounting for taste. For this inaugural issue of The Good Taste Awards, we polled you, our readers, and reached out across a network of well-traveled experts and trusted contributors. Together we did a little accounting, and what we came up with was a celebration of some of the people, places, and things that embody the idea of good taste right now.

What is "good taste"? It's a chef and restaurateur perfecting their recipe for flawless hospitality (see "The Kings of Service," p. 32) and it's anti-food-waste activists working to make imperfect fruit more attractive (p. 18). It's Thomas Keller on a ship (p. 26) and great vegetarian food in Berlin that'll make you forget currywurst (p. 68).

Speaking of tasty travels, I wanted to mention something else we're feeling good about here: Saveur Trips, a new program of editor-curated eating adventures we're doing in partnership with the travel experts at Butterfield & Robinson. I've been on the calls sorting out these itineraries and, trust me, they're the types of food-focused, deep-dive, guide-you-to-just-the-right-baby-pineapple-lady trips I'd like to take. This year we're headed to Peru, New Orleans, and the wine regions of Napa and Sonoma. Details are at saveur.com/trips, with more information coming soon about the next round of trips to Europe, Asia, and beyond.

One more thing about the Good Taste list. It covers a lot of ground, but it does not claim to be complete. The honorees gathered in these pages represent a small sampling of the folks in the fields of food, drink, and travel who continually inspire and excite us and whom we'll keep covering throughout the year. Did we leave out some worthy contenders? Of course we did. Best-of lists are inherently subjective and built to be challenged and revised. (That's why they come out every year.) Let us know what we missed and who you'd like to see nominated next time around.

Adam

Adam Sachs

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and Instagram @sachsmo

SAVVY KITCHEN

TIPS FROM WOLF'S EXPERT CHEFS

Cook through this issue with help from Wolf's culinary experts, Chef Garth Blackburn and Chef Brian Rizzo. These esteemed chefs offer extra advice on topics featured in this issue, as well as insights into how Wolf's superior appliances will help you achieve delicious results every time.



CHEF GARTH BLACKBURN

Chef Garth has a passion for all things Texas, including stellar sources for seasonal ingredients. As Executive Chef for Sub-Zero and Wolf for the South Central U.S., he oversees state-of-the-art culinary centers in Dallas and Houston. He fell in love with food as a member of the U.S. National Cycling Team eating across 30 countries.



CHEF BRIAN RIZZO

Chef Brian has been helping develop and perfect Wolf products at the company's Madison, Wisconsin, headquarters for almost a decade. In addition to providing cooking insights that help the engineers design supremely capable appliances, he crafts recipes and techniques to help Wolf owners enjoy creating more delicious meals.

EXCLUSIVE TIPS IN THIS ISSUE!



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Low, Slow, and Delicious PAGES 42-43

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INTRODUCING
the **2015**
GOOD TASTE AWARDS

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Shane Mitchell eats her way through **Santiago, Chile**, and deems it the world's most exciting up-and-coming culinary destination.



ON THE COVER

Delicate lobster with tangles of linguine (see page 29 for recipe), inspired by a dish served at Fulvio Pierangelini's new restaurant, Irene, in Florence's Hotel Savoy. Cover photograph by Christina Holmes; food styling by Chris Lanier.

CHRISTINA HOLMES

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Berlin's vegan restaurant Kopps is part of a vegetarian wave taking over the city. See story on page 68.



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Hey, herbivores: **Berlin won The New Vegetarian Capital award** in part because of its myriad amazing markets. Read about them at saveur.com/berlin-markets.

Head to saveur.com/goodtasteawards for **additional intel on our Good Taste Awards winners**, including interviews, maps, city guides, and more.

Want to dig deeper into why **Australia has the world's best wine regions?** Visit saveur.com/australian-wine for drinking recommendations, guides, and more.

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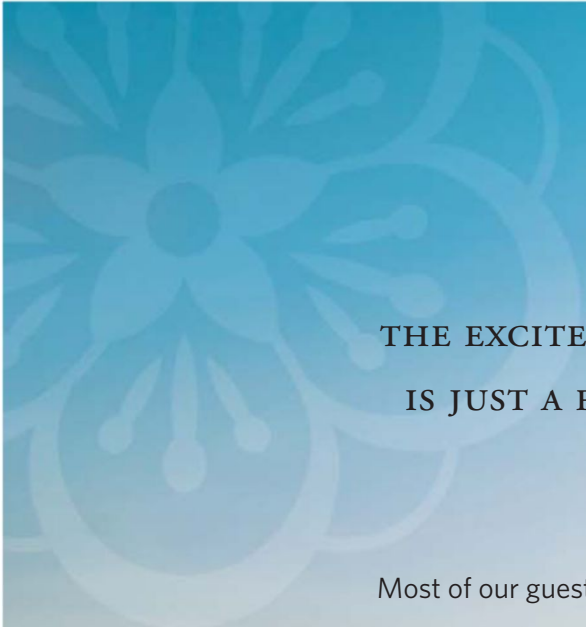
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GOOD TASTE AWARDS

OCTOBER 2015



A World's Fair That's All About Food

At Expo Milano, Team USA is explaining that vast and contradictory thing—American cuisine—to a global audience

Collard greens are growing in Milan. Collards and Clemson okra and red Tabasco chile peppers. They and dozens of distinctly American vegetables and herbs are sprouting out of the quarter-acre “vertical farm” growing along the length of the USA Pavilion at Expo Milano (usapavilion2015.net), the vast world’s fair under way through October 31 some six miles northwest of the Piazza del Duomo as the pigeon flies. This year’s theme: How to feed a rapidly growing world population. Number of countries participating: 145. Official mascots: a gaggle of smiling, anthropomorphized fruits and veggies (including Guagliò the Garlic and Rodolfo the Fig). What’s cool about America’s involvement at the expo? Well, there’s the giant vertical farm—plus the fact that they’re selling New England-style lobster rolls at the pavilion’s food truck court and that volunteer “student ambassadors” are decked out in custom Brooks Brothers navy blazers and red-white-and-blue neckerchiefs. But what’s really compelling, even if you can’t make it to the fair, is the group’s earnest mission

to educate four million visitors about the scope of American cuisine, its traditions and its future. “You come here and learn about the regionality of barbecue and Thanksgiving,” says Mitchell Davis, on loan from the James Beard Foundation as the pavilion’s chief creative director. “But the interesting thing is the range of different voices in the exhibition: the researchers, urban farmers, chefs and everyone in between. And a lot of them disagree about the future of food and how we’re going to feed everyone—but that, too, is a very American idea.”

“It’s a world’s fair so it’s wacky—there’s a parade of dancing vegetables every day,” Davis says. “But there’s a public-diplomacy side of things, too. We have an opportunity to make an impression on people. We were talking to the commissioner general of the Kuwait Pavilion about doing a dinner together. He took my hand and said, ‘This is a great thing for world peace.’ And he meant it.” —Adam Sachs

The volunteers and staff of the USA Pavilion at Expo Milano pose on a balcony under their quarter-acre vertical farm.

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MR. SMITH ROCKS WASHINGTON

Iconoclast winemaker Charles Smith spurns rural romanticism
for a Dr Pepper plant in an industrial part of Seattle



I couldn't move my vineyards out of Walla Walla," says Charles Smith as we stand outside his new 30,000-square-foot winery in the Pioneer Square neighborhood of Seattle. "But I could move my winery here," he says, as he gestures to Seattle's clattering urban landscape. A former Dr Pepper bottling plant redesigned by acclaimed architecture firm Olson Kundig, it's all modern layers of steel, glass, and concrete with two glass-walled tasting rooms inside. With his new building, Smith is making a point: Good wine can be fun, and not everything has to be yoked to tradition all the time. Smith even plans to display a massive sign on his roof as a call to would-be visitors flying in planes overhead—not exactly the demure overture you would expect from a respected winemaker.

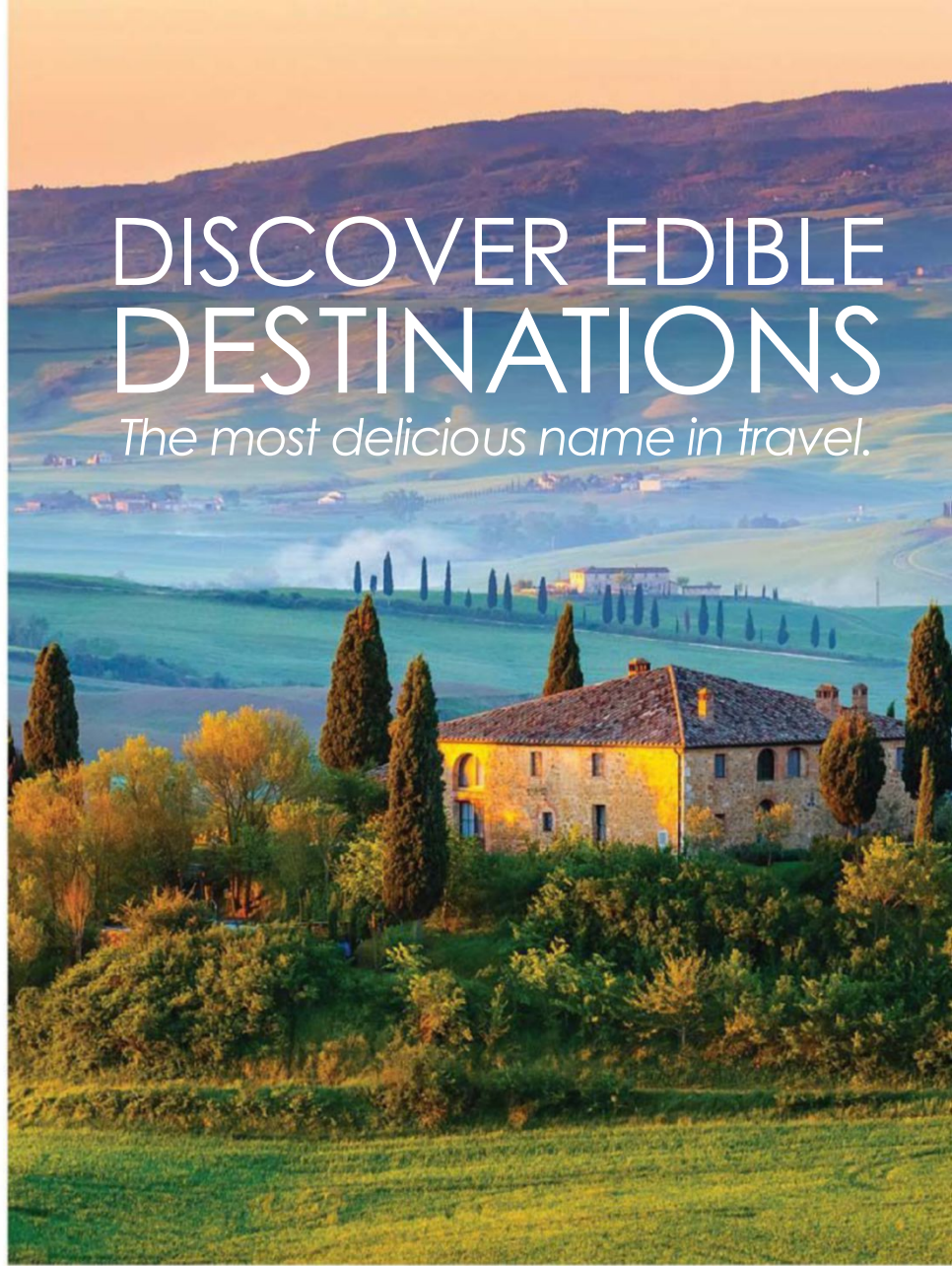
Smith, a former rock-band manager, is recognizable by his headful of long, silver

curls. Though he identifies as a classical winemaker, he has long been stylistically at odds with the industry's rural romanticism. He started making wines in Walla Walla in 1999, plumbing the rich and gamy depths of Washington syrahs in high-end, vineyard-specific batches. His success with the Rhône grape helped propel the great Washington syrah rush. But years ago, Smith saw the need for good casual wines, too, and he turned out to be one of the great populists of the wine industry. He put punky black and white graphics on his bottles and gave them names like Boom Boom Syrah, Velvet Devil Merlot, and Kung Fu Girl Riesling, a \$12 crowd-pleaser. There is plenty of cheap wine sloshing



around on the market today. But Smith's dedication to making wines with varietal character and traceable vineyards at a lower price point was at the forefront of a push toward great, affordable wine.

As we walked through the winery, Smith excitedly showed off the looming presses and fermenters. "It's all about the wine," he said. Smith may not want to be known as a marketer, but he's used showmanship—from rock and burlesque shows at the winery to his bold labels—to market his brand in a way that reaches drinkers who might not otherwise find serious wine. "Sometimes people can't access great wines because the labels are impossible to decipher," he says. "My wines communicate in a contemporary style; they tell an American story with straight talk." —Sara Dickerman



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You would be forgiven for being unable to find the little, unassuming Italian village of San Vito di Cadore on a map, but AGA (Via Trieste 6; agaristorante.it), a new restaurant from husband-and-wife team Oliver Piras and Alessandra Del Favero, is about to change that. Located in the Dolomites, next to the couple's larger, less formal trattoria, AGA is small—that would be only-four-tables small—and is the epitome of the zero-kilometer movement that's all the rage. All veggies are

Pack a map and a pair of hiking boots and book early: This four-table restaurant is worth a trek into the Italian Dolomites

grown on the couple's farm, game is shot in the fields nearby, and herbs and salads are sourced from the woods above the restaurant. Yes, Piras worked at René Redzepi's Noma before bringing his mentor's emphasis on foraging alpine-side, but folks in this region have been gathering wild food since long before it was trendy. Don't miss a taste of "Old Man's Beard," a salad of greens and herbs picked from mountain slopes—it's enough alone to make the trip.

—Ondine Cohane

AGA owners Alessandra Del Favero and Oliver Piras.



At The Varnish, Eric Alperin (left) executes well-made classics and riffs, like a John Collins (below).



L.A.'s CRAFT COCKTAIL BOOM

Los Angeles' drinking landscape has undergone a massive expansion over the last two years, spreading from downtown to almost every neighborhood and including both flawless classics and cutting-edge concoctions. Here, four game-changing bartenders to know

The Veteran ERIC ALPERIN

Craft cocktails were rare in L.A. in 2007 when New York City barkeep Eric Alperin went West to open The Varnish in the back of Cole's, a classic downtown French Dip joint. The pioneering speakeasy turned out to be the training ground for future star bartenders like Chris Bostick, Marcos Tello, and Chris Ojeda, who have gone on to open their own cocktail operations. Alperin also set the standard for impeccably made drinks at The Varnish (118 E 6th Street; thevarnishbar.com), which it maintains today with riffs like the crisp John Collins (pictured above; \$13), featuring malty genever instead of gin.

The Innovator DEVON TARBY

A partner at cocktail consulting company Proprietors LLC, Devon Tarby got her start at The Varnish before linking up with David Kaplan and Alex Day at the disco-themed Honeycut, which bridged the gap between serious cocktails and clubby nightlife. Their latest venture is the neighborhood watering hole Normandie Club, with a hidden, geekier bar, Walker Inn, inside (3162 W 6th Street; thewalkerinnla.com). For the latter, Tarby worked up a list of location-inspired drinks like the Sonoma, a heady mix of chardonnay, calvados, honey, verjus, and a white-pepper distillate (\$20).

The Restaurant Trendsetters

JOSH GOLDMAN & JULIAN COX

If you've dined in Los Angeles, you've probably encountered the liquid work of Josh Goldman and Julian Cox, the go-to consulting team for many of the city's restaurants, including Bestia and Picca. Their latest program is at Belcampo (317 S Broadway; belcampomeatco.com), a butcher shop-restaurant hybrid in Santa Monica where they match the meat-heavy menu with mezzal and whiskey drinks. (Their delicious Sherry Cobbler, \$12, marries two kinds of sherry and accents them with the slight smokiness of scotch.)

—Robert Simonson

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Why the Anti-Food-Waste Movement Matters

Eating “ugly” food is a beautiful idea. It saves money and just might put a dent in world hunger

Isabel Soares was nervous as she stepped up to the stage at the MAD Symposium in Copenhagen, but she knew this was her best chance to alert the culinary world's elite to a monstrous injustice in the food world: rampant discrimination against ugly produce.

Sound crazy? It's not. Produce distributors around the globe have stringent rules for the size, shape, and number of blemishes (usually zero) for a tomato or peach. If the rules were the same for humans, the petite brunette noted wryly, “Being so short, I wouldn't be fit for the market.”

Her solution? **Fruta Feia**, or Ugly Fruit, a co-op that collects and sells imperfect fruit at bargain prices. Since its founding in 2013, it has rescued more than 140 tons of food. With Soares' help, food waste has become a culinary cause célèbre. This spring, deep-fried skate cartilage, veggie burgers made with leftover pulp from a juicing machine, and cod collars were on the menu at New York City's Blue Hill restaurant during what was essentially Fashion Week for food scraps. If you follow the news, it's difficult to avoid the disturbing statistics: The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization reports that 1.3 billion tons of

food is wasted annually. Here in the United States, 40 percent of food, or 80 billion pounds, is tossed out to the tune of \$100 billion annually. This, while 1 in 6 Americans faces hunger.

Doug Rauch, the former president of Trader Joe's, wanted to change that. This summer, he opened **Daily Table**, a grocery store in Dorchester, Massachusetts, that keeps prices low by collecting and selling food that might otherwise be thrown away: milk near its sell-by date, fish that were inadvertently caught, and blemished produce. In addition, the store offers inexpensive, ready-to-eat meals like broccoli soup (\$1.29 a tub) and Salisbury steak and brown rice (\$1.99).

Only 26, Claire Cummings works similar magic as **Bon Appétit Management Company's** first-ever waste specialist. With her leadership, the company, which operates cafés in universities and corporations such as Google, announced that by 2018, 80 percent of its 650-plus restaurants will regularly donate excess food to a food bank or other nonprofit. She also helped to launch the **Imperfectly Delicious** program, which, like Fruta Feia, delivers ugly produce to its network of chefs. In its first year, it saved around 80 tons of food that would otherwise have been destined for the Dumpster.

If you want guidance on doing something about food waste, pick up the just-released **Waste-Free Kitchen Handbook** (Chronicle Books) by Dana Gunders, a food-waste expert at the Natural Resources Defense Council. It serves up household uses for food scraps (you can use a banana peel to polish your shoes) and storage tricks (broccoli, carrots, and leafy greens go in the high-humidity crisper drawer, while apples, berries, and peppers go in the low-humidity one)—plus 20 recipes for dishes like sour-milk pancakes and chocolate mousse made with overripe avocados. Making a difference has never been more delicious. —Jane Black



Step 2

Blend egg mixture starting on MANUAL/LO and gradually increase speed to 4 over the course of 1 minute.

Step 3

Reduce speed to LO to add melted butter through emulsion cup. Gradually increase speed to 6 and blend for 2 minutes.

Step 4

Season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

For the full recipe, visit WolfGourmet.com/HollandaiseSauce



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The Middle Eastern Moment

Michael Solomonov—the chef-owner of five restaurants in Philadelphia, including Israeli-inspired Zahav and Dizengoff—reflects on the ascent of Middle Eastern flavors

It's great to see the food of the Middle East finally get its due here in the States. Back when I started cooking, chefs looked to the big names in San Sebastian, Spain, for inspiration. Those guys had super expensive kitchens and hundred-dollar cookbooks, and we wanted to emulate their brands of exquisite cooking. Now, people aren't looking to star chefs as much for inspiration—instead, they're attracted by the flavors, dishes, and techniques of simple Middle Eastern cooking.

Let's give props to some early adopters: Before it was even cool, Mourad Lahlou in San Francisco was making couscous by hand, and Ana Sortun of Oleana in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had been expertly using Turkish flavors for years. Thanks to trendsetters like them, every line cook in every restaurant now knows what *za'atar* is—the indispensable spice mix made with sumac, sesame, and herbs.

More and more, I'm finding American-made versions of ingredients once imported only from the Middle East. In Portland, there's a restaurant called Levant where they serve freekeh from local farmers—years ago I could find the grain only in the Middle Eastern markets in West Philly. For my own restaurants, I use a halloúmi-inspired sheep's milk cheese from just over the Delaware River in New Jersey.

Interest in Middle Eastern food is just going to keep growing: The region has something like 30 cuisines, so there are many areas yet to be discovered. I think American chefs will continue to open more and more Middle Eastern restaurants and explore the region's ingredients and techniques, and I couldn't be more excited.

Michael Solomonov's cookbook *Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) is due out this month.

Fried Eggplant with Tahini and Pomegranate Seeds

Serves 6

Active: 1 hr.; Total: 9 hr.

This eggplant dish from Michael Solomonov's Zahav restaurant in Philadelphia highlights classic Middle Eastern ingredients: carob molasses, tahini, and pomegranate.

- 2 large eggplants (2 ½ lbs.)
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. tahini
- ⅛ tsp. ground cumin
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 3 Tbsp. carob molasses (kalustyans.com)
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup halved pistachios

1 Using a vegetable peeler, peel 4 evenly spaced, 1-inch wide lengthwise strips of skin from the eggplants. Cut the eggplants crosswise into ¾-inch-thick slices and then arrange on 2 racks, each set over a rimmed baking sheet. Season the eggplant slices generously on both sides with salt and then refrigerate for at least 8 hours.

2 Meanwhile, make the tahini sauce: In a blender, combine the lemon juice, ¾ teaspoons salt, and the garlic, and purée until smooth. Let stand for 10 minutes to allow the garlic to mellow. Pour the garlic and lemon juice through a fine sieve into a medium bowl, discarding the solids, and then whisk in the tahini and cumin. While whisking, slowly pour in 6 tablespoons ice-cold water, and continue whisking until the tahini sauce is smooth. Set aside ⅓ cup of the tahini sauce for the eggplant and reserve the remaining for another use.

3 Pour enough oil to come ½ inch up the side of a 12-inch skillet and heat over medium-high. Using paper towels, wipe away the excess moisture and salt from the eggplant slices. When the oil is shimmering, add enough eggplant to fit in a single layer and fry, turning once, until very dark on the outside, about 10 minutes. Using tongs, transfer the eggplant to paper towels to drain briefly, and then fry the remaining eggplant slices.

4 Arrange the eggplant slices on a large serving platter and drizzle with the reserved tahini sauce and carob molasses. Sprinkle with the pomegranate seeds and then the pistachios and serve while hot.

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Runners-up: Drink,
Boston; The Dead
Rabbit, New York City

Destination- Worthy Old- School Bar Scene

DUBLIN

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Wisconsin; Budapest,
Hungary

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ORLEANS

Runners-up: Zuni Cafe,
San Francisco; Peter
Luger's, Brooklyn

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Washington

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THE PARK HYATT,
TOKYO

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The Langham, London;
Bemelmans Bar at The
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Carolina; La Fonda on
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TOKYO

IS STILL THE GREATEST PLACE TO EAT ON EARTH



Clockwise from top left: the lights of Ginza; chef Hiroyasu Kawate of restaurant-of-the-moment Florilege; the yakitori-ya Jomon; Rei Mochizuki, assistant chef to chef Zaiyu Hasegawa, at hot spot Jimbocho Den.



Ivan Orkin, the noodle maestro of Ivan Ramen restaurants in Tokyo and New York City, explains why Japan's capital lives up to its culinary reputation—for reasons you didn't know

I love Japan so much that I've spent my whole life studying the country, language, and culture. There are these two misconceptions people have about Tokyo: that it's one of the most expensive cities in the world (which hasn't been the case for 25 years) and that the food most worth seeking out is high-end sushi. Certainly, if you have the money, you can go to a super fancy \$500 sushi place. But you can eat delicious, thoughtfully made food here very cheaply—more so than in other industrialized countries. More important, there's an amazing consistency of quality here at all levels.

Almost every major train station and department store has great restaurants. And well-made soba can be had for just ten bucks a plate.

Another thing most people don't realize is that the French restaurants here are some of the best in the world, and the Italian ones are sublime. They use a lot of ingredients that are Japanese: pork and lamb from Hokkaido, bread made with freshly milled wheat flour from the north (the bakers here are unbelievable).

Of course, you have ramen, tempura, and yakitori in America, but here they are obsessions. There are ramen magazines, ramen streets, ramen museums.

The very best tempura places change their oil every 20–30 minutes, cook the most seasonal vegetables one piece at a time, and bring them to you on a piece of rice paper on a beautiful plate. Yakitori is different here because the chicken is different here—it just has this perfume of amazing chicken flavor.

Tokyo is a rapidly changing place—it's almost hard to fathom. I leave for six months, and I have to check the food blogs before I return to see what I missed. Restaurants are opening constantly, old ones are closing—things are shifting all the time. There's something new to look forward to in this city every time I come.

TRENDING >>

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Behind the Grain Reformation

Tartine's Chad Robertson celebrates the lab that is arming him and other bakers with a whole new set of grains

Once upon a time, there was white flour and whole-wheat flour, and that was about it. In California, I'd watch my chef friends return from the markets with diverse hauls of amazing produce and think, *Wait, what about us bakers?*

At Tartine, I've always tried to use as many interesting grains as possible, including lesser-known varieties like kamut. (It makes a melt-in-your-mouth chamomile shortbread that puts white-flour shortbreads to shame.) But the alternative grain movement has been really taking off in recent years, thanks to The Bread

Lab, run by Dr. Stephen Jones in affiliation with Washington State University. He and his team work with thousands of unique strains of wheat, and over the years have created many new varieties. They select and breed grains that are sustainable and affordable enough for farmers to grow—and delicious enough for chefs, brewers, and consumers to buy.

After eating a phenomenal piece of bread in Copenhagen, I described it to Dr. Jones, and his team started working on replicating it using Nordic grain varieties. At first, the stalks they planted weren't

strong enough, but he and his team kept crossing the wheat with other strains, fine-tuning until they produced a unique and new ingredient bursting with flavor and nutrition. I now use it for richly flavored, perfectly chewy loaves. You can't buy it on the shelves yet, but I hope that in 20 years, with Dr. Jones' help, bakers' choices will be as diverse and plentiful as vegetables at the farmers' market.

Chad Robertson is the co-owner of San Francisco's Tartine Bakery and Bar Tartine, and the author of Tartine Bread (Chronicle, 2013).

KIM BINCZEWSKI; OPPOSITE: MATT TAYLOR-GROSS

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SAVVY KITCHEN TIPS BY CHEF GARTH BLACKBURN

THE ART OF THE CRUST

There's nothing better than homemade bread, the smell alone is intoxicating. There's an art to ensuring the perfect loaf, which includes precise temperature, even heat, and a few additional tips that I apply in my kitchen.



1. Don't rush the rise. Most bread recipes require the dough to double in size before punching down. However, your dough will proof much faster in a closed oven set to 90 F degrees, or simply allow bread to rise in a closed oven with the oven light on.
2. Steam, steam, steam! Steam allows bread to rise as it cooks, before the crust sets. Steam also provides that deliciously crunchy "tug" when you bite into the crust, and creates a perfectly golden sheen.
3. Rest Up. While bread fresh out of the oven smells divine, wait to dive in - it's still in the process of cooking, and will quickly lose volume under the pressure of the knife.



Chad Robertson's Kamut-Chamomile Shortbread Cookies

Makes about 5 dozen cookies

Active: 25 min.; Total: 2½ hr.

Kamut, a strain of wheat that is one of a growing number of alternative grains, makes these cookies extra tender and crumbly. Be sure to score the cookies as soon as they come out of the oven; they will be too fragile to cut once cooled.

- 2 sticks plus 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup dried chamomile flowers
- 1¾ cups kamut flour (amazon.com)
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. sugar
- ¼ cup honey
- Finely grated zest of 3 lemons

1 Heat the oven to 350° and line a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with parchment paper. In a small saucepan, melt ½ stick butter over medium heat. Add the

chamomile flowers and then remove the pan from the heat and let steep for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk the kamut flour with the all-purpose flour and cornstarch.

2 Rewarm the ½ stick butter until liquefied and then pour it through a fine sieve set over the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle; reserve the chamomile flowers. Add the remaining 1½ sticks plus 2 tablespoons butter along with the salt and beat on medium-high speed until the consistency of whipped cream, about 2 minutes. Add ¼ cup sugar, the honey, and lemon zest, and beat on medium speed until smooth and just

combined. Sift the dry ingredients into the bowl, add the reserved chamomile, and beat on low speed until just combined.

3 Scrape the dough into the prepared baking pan and press evenly into the bottom. Bake the shortbreads until golden brown, about 25 minutes. Transfer the pan to a rack and, while shortbreads are warm, sprinkle them evenly with the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. Using a paring knife, score the top of the shortbreads into 2-by-1-inch bars and then let cool completely. Refrigerate the shortbreads in the baking pan for at least 1 hour and then unmold and cut into individual cookies.

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Edward Lee (left) and John Besh (right) focus on mentoring to bring underprivileged kids into top culinary ranks.



THE MENTORS

BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COOKING

Since 2011, **John Besh's** Chefs Move initiative has provided aspiring minority chefs from New Orleans with a cooking school scholarship, a chef-mentor, and a kitchen internship.

This month, **Edward Lee** of 610 Magnolia in Louisville, Kentucky, kicks off the Smoke & Soul Pop-Up Dinner Series, a restaurant program staffed by underprivileged kids.

The pair sat down to talk about their philanthropic efforts

EDWARD LEE: I had this hairbrained idea to do a pop-up restaurant entirely staffed by underprivileged kids. They will all do rotations in every job, from serving to cooking to office management to answering phones. I don't know if you remember this, John, but you invited me to a dinner to celebrate your Chefs Move scholarships and the kids were just beaming with happiness and pride. After that, I decided I didn't want to do a charity where you just write a check.

JOHN BESH: I remember that! I think what it really comes down to is creating a mentorship process that never ends. We set them up, so once they come to New York they have guidance from chefs like Michael Anthony at Gramercy Tavern. Kids from underprivileged backgrounds sometimes don't know that the possibilities are endless when you find your passion.

EL: I'm modeling my project on what you're doing, which is focusing on fewer people, but trying to be really impactful with that small group. I don't have it in me to change the whole society of poverty, but what I can do is attach myself to a few kids each year.

JB: It's always kind of bothered me that among my own ranks, we have very few African-Americans

and chefs from underprivileged backgrounds. Culinary school can be \$50,000. And I want all of us to have the opportunity to participate in this cultural economy. If I keep having to import white boys and girls from suburbs across the world to cook New Orleans food, we'll slowly lose the homegrown culture of New Orleans.

EL: When I talk to the young interns at my restaurants, I say, "Can you go home and ask your grandma what she's making and how she's making it?" I thought the grandmothers would be really secretive, but they tell us, "I want this or that on the menu." My grandmother died before I became a real chef, and one of my biggest regrets is that I never wrote down her recipes. If we can preserve a couple of recipes from the community here, all of the sudden it becomes something really important.

JB: As much as I hate the celebrity chef thing, it's allowed us to do more. I found in New Orleans, it turned out to be the food that brought it back after Katrina. We can't be only for sustainable food; we need to sustain culture and the human soul.



Heavyweight Chefs Raise the Dining Standards at Sea

In an exciting development for cruising, a growing contingent of bold-faced-name chefs is rolling out restaurants on ships: Jose Garces of Volvêr in Philadelphia will unveil a tapas bar, Pincho, and a Latin seafood restaurant, Bayamo, on the Norwegian Escape in November. And Thomas Keller is partnering with Seabourn to bring his restaurants to the high seas. "We're updating their casual menus with some items from Ad Hoc and Bouchon," says Keller. "Next spring we'll launch the first By Thomas Keller restaurant across the Seabourn fleet." But Keller won't just be replicating dishes from his restaurants. "We'll use ingredients, particularly fruits and vegetables, at ports of call along the route," he says. "It'll allow us to be more spontaneous with our menus."

—Alex Testere

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What's Old Is New Again

Florence gets new life, thanks to the arrival of a spate of culinary hot spots

Romantic, charming Florence is many wonderful things. But a forward-thinking food destination? Not until this past year. A crop of splashy openings is delivering a shot of modernity and buzzy style to the historic Italian city.

The Glossy Museum Wine Bar: The much anticipated expansion of the **Museo dell'Opera del Duomo** (ilgrandemuseodelduomo.it) will be unveiled this month next to the centuries-old Duomo. The sleek, modern space will house a new chic wine bar, designed by museum architect Adolfo Natalini, with prime outdoor seating near the Duomo's domed roof.

The Upscale Food Court: For years, the upstairs floor of **Il Mercato Centrale Firenze** (mercatocentrale.it), which opened in 1874, sat empty. A recent renovation transformed it into the ideal Italian food court, stocked with a cheese monger, a craft-beer stand, a wine station, and stalls of salumi, pizza, gelato, fresh-made pasta, and chocolate.

The Design-Minded Cooking School: A gorgeously modern home-design showroom, **Desinare** (desinare.it) offers Florentine cooking classes taught by local chefs, including Enrica Della Martira, a finalist on the popular Italian version of *Masterchef*.

The Instagram-Worthy All-Day Café: In a cool, stripped-down space where chandeliers hang from exposed wires, the shape-shifting **La Ménagère** (lamenagere.it) transforms from a café with coffee from local roaster Ditta Artigianale in the morning to a casually cool lunch spot in the afternoon to the city's most inventive cocktail bar at night. In the back, a tasting-menu restaurant serves twists on Italian classics, like warm-and-cold caprese salad in a glass.

The Big-Name-Chef Restaurant: For certain food-obsessed Italians, the name "Fulvio Pierangelini" has a mystical lore. After earning two Michelin stars at Tuscany's Il Gambero Rosso, he closed it down. At the new **Irene** restaurant in Hotel Savoy (roccofortehotels.com), he serves simple but elegant dishes like lobster linguine (see page 29 for recipe) and red-prawn tartare with ricotta.

—Gina Hamadey

The sunny dining room of La Ménagère showcases high design with a relaxed vibe.



Lobster Linguine with Chiles

Serves 4

Total: 1 hr.

This classic pasta, from award-winning chef Fulvio Pierangelini at his restaurant, Irene, in Florence, Italy, is enriched with the lobsters' coral, or roe sac. It adds a pop of briny flavor to the pasta, but can be omitted if the lobsters you buy don't contain it.

- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. linguine
- Two 1½-lb. live lobsters, halved lengthwise (heads, claws, and tails separated), coral reserved
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 4 thyme sprigs
- 2 red finger chiles, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup white wine
- ½ cup loosely packed basil leaves
- ¼ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Ground white pepper
- Pecorino Romano, for serving

1 In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook the linguine until al dente, about 9 minutes. Using tongs, lift the linguine from the water to drain, and then remove 1 cup pasta water and reserve. Add the lobster claws to the pot of boiling water and cook until the shells are bright red and the meat is cooked through, about 6 minutes. Drain and crack open the claws, and then roughly chop two of the claw meat pieces; discard the claw shells.

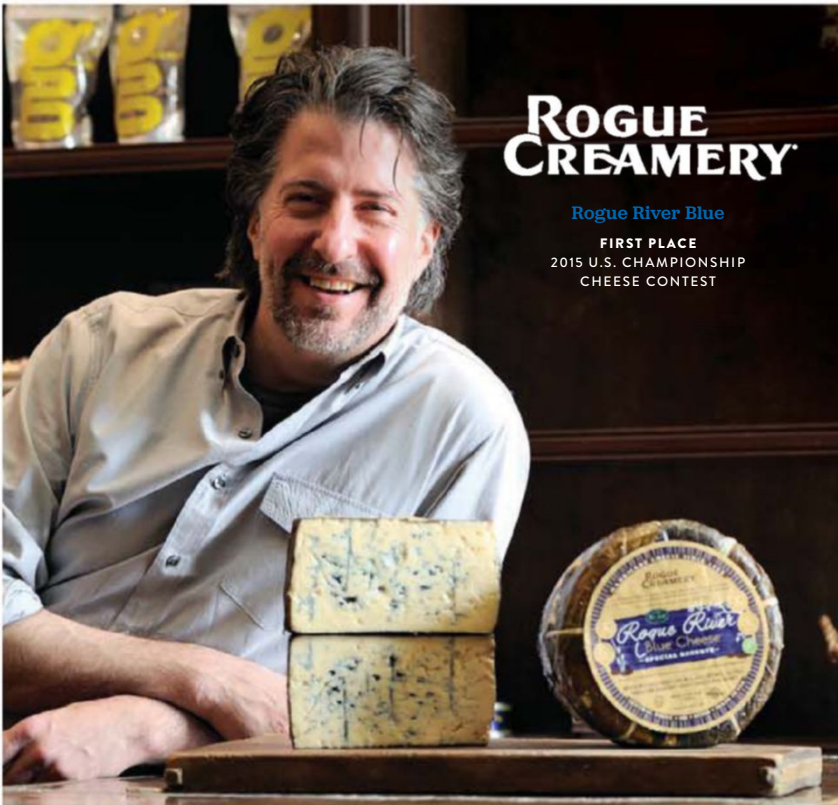
2 In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high. Working in batches, add the head and tail pieces, meat side down, and cook, turning once, until the meat is browned and cooked through, about 4 minutes. Transfer the pieces to a plate and return the skillet to medium-high heat. Add the thyme, chiles, and garlic and cook, stirring, until soft, about 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook until reduced by half, about 4 minutes.

3 Add the pasta to the skillet along with the reserved pasta water, whole and chopped claw meat, tail pieces, coral (if using), basil, and parsley, and season with salt and white pepper. Gently toss to combine, and then remove from the heat and transfer the pasta to a serving platter. Grate pecorino over the pasta and serve while hot.



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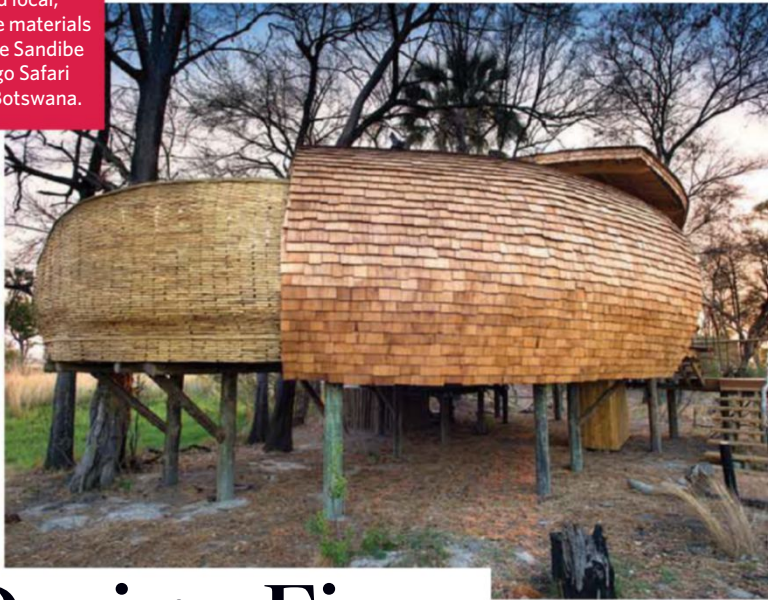
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Michaelis Boyd sourced local, sustainable materials to build the Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge in Botswana.



—The Style—
SOPHISTICATES

The Design Firm Without Borders

For architecture outfit Michaelis Boyd, gorgeous projects all over the world reveal the connection between style and place

Creating stunning works that are impressive both for their geographic range and diversity of style, the London-based Michaelis Boyd Associates is the hospitality-focused design firm to watch. In the past year or so, partners Alex Michaelis and Tim Boyd have trotted the globe turning out impressive projects: the solar-powered Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge made of local materials in Botswana; cleverly accented restaurant Pots, Pans, and Boards in Dubai for Michelin-starred British chef Tom Aikens; and a glam redo of London's famed members-only Groucho Club. (They've also found time for pro-bono work, creating a housing complex for military pensioners in Nepal.) In a few months, they'll debut the modernist Soho Farmhouse in England's Oxfordshire as well as the industrial-chic Williamsburg Hotel, with a rooftop bar, in a former water tower factory in Brooklyn. —*Andrew Sessa*

NEW HOTEL DINING
DESTINATIONS

It used to be that one big-name chef was a coup for hotels. This fall, two ambitious new venues unveil multiple restaurants with pedigreed talent

Among a growing class of hotels that are themselves dining destinations, **The Old Clare Hotel**, which opened in August in Sydney, may have one of the highest restaurant-to-room ratios, with three full restaurants and just 62 rooms. It will eventually house the tasting-menu-only restaurant Silvereye with Sam Miller, former executive sous chef of Noma; Automata, featuring Asian-inflected plates from Clayton Wells, former sous chef of Momofuku Seiobo; and British chef Jason Atherton's refined all-day diner Kensington Street Social. Halfway around the world, the 169-room **Faena Hotel Miami Beach**, a redevelopment of the historic Art Deco-style Saxony Hotel, will have a blockbuster culinary lineup for its November opening. In addition to the hotel's executive chef Gabriel Ask, Argentinian grill maestro Francis Mallmann will helm the open-fire kitchen Los Fuegos in view of the ocean, and Austin's Paul Qui will showcase his trademark mix of Filipino, French, and American flavors at a yet-to-be-named restaurant, his first project outside of Texas. —*Evelyn Chen*



The Old Clare Hotel on Sydney's up-and-coming Kensington Street is set on the grounds of the 1920s heritage-listed County Clare pub and former Carlton & United Brewery offices.

TOP: DOOK (2)



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THE KINGS

Will Guidara and Daniel Humm are on a quest to make New York City's Eleven Madison Park the greatest restaurant in the world—one perfectly choreographed, exceptionally hospitable meal at a time. BY DAVID KAMP



"It comes down to us agreeing upon what's the best thing for the restaurant as a whole," says Guidara (left) of his relationship with Humm (right).



So amiably and briskly was Will Guidara recounting his eventful career in the restaurant business that it took a moment to catch up with the discordance of something he had said a few sentences earlier: "Fine dining and hospitality don't necessarily go together."

Wait, how's that again? Isn't fine dining supposed to represent the apotheosis of hospitality? *More claret, madame? May I debone the turbot for you, monsieur?*

Guidara clarified: He was speaking of the many circumstances that can make a fancy-restaurant experience feel "cold"—stiffly formal service; an unnavigable wine list; a highfalutin cult-of-chef ethos to the point where the customers feel like they're doing the kitchen's bidding rather than the other way around.

And, indeed, there are many reasons, in theory, to be totally intimidated by the prospect of dining at Eleven Madison Park, the Manhattan restaurant that Guidara runs with co-owner and chef Daniel Humm. It is as highly decorated as a restaurant can be, with four stars from the *New York Times*, three from the *Guide Michelin*, and a Grand Award from *Wine Spectator*. It is expensive, offering no à la carte options, only a \$225-per-person degustation menu. It occupies an imposing, high-ceilinged, park-facing space within the Metropolitan Life North Building, a muscular Art Deco tower whose entryways are framed by mighty limestone arches.

Yet Guidara and Humm have engineered Eleven Madison

Park to be an unrelentingly warm place, examining and re-examining every facet of the visiting experience to see whether it can be made more hospitable. There is neither a reservations desk nor a coat-check area, only a brace of greeters who, through some rigorously inculcated organizational jujitsu, know both how to welcome you upon arrival and how to reunite you with your outerwear at night's end without the grim transactional aid of a numbered plastic ticket. There are captains and sommeliers trained to take your measure and gauge how gabby they should be with you, internally sensing whether you are projecting "Make yourselves invisible, people," or "Gimme some New York sass, hon." There are courses that cleverly and disarmingly acknowledge the New York City setting, such as a "Beef" presentation that is actually a few slices of house-made pastrami, optimally steamed and marbled and served with little rounds of rye bread (and proportionally a more sensible way to eat pastrami than the Dagwood servings you get at delis).

And there are Guidara and Humm themselves, one or both of whom stop by to chat with nearly every customer—a little bit of trattoria-style neighborliness amid the big-night-out trappings.

The two men make no bones about it: Their aim is for Eleven Madison Park to be the best restaurant in New York City—which, depending on your level of New York chauvinism, might also mean the best in the United States, or even the world. Over the last three years, Eleven Madison Park has been the only

OF SERVICE



Photographs by Walter Smith

American restaurant to crack the top five of the “World’s 50 Best Restaurants” list sponsored by S. Pellegrino (it is currently ranked number five), and Guidara and Humm have designs on the top spot. “You can be dismissive of stars and lists, but we decided to play the game,” said Humm. “It’s a form of motivation. We stay humble, but do we want to win? Definitely.”

What sets the chef and his restaurateur apart from others pursuing this goal is that theirs is a double act. Guidara and Humm, Humm and Guidara—they’re always spoken of this way, in tandem, equally weighted, which is something of an anomaly. The other U.S. restaurants in their class, while generally not slouches in the service department, are primarily chef-identified: Thomas Keller’s French Laundry and Per Se, Daniel Boulud’s Daniel, Joshua Skenes’ Saison, Grant Achatz’s Alinea and Next.

This marks a huge pendulum swing from the middle decades of the 20th century, when upper-echelon restaurants were identified by the impresarios out front, legends like Henri Soulé of Le Pavillon and Joe Baum of the Four Seasons. What Guidara and Humm have sought, since meeting each other nearly a decade ago as precocious up-and-comers in Danny Meyer’s Union Square Hospitality Group organization, is a third way, in which the general manager is the hierarchical equivalent of the chef, and the kitchen and service staffs work more as a blended workforce than as separate entities.

“There’s always been this tension in restaurants, that the chef

puts all this work into a dish, and then a person who didn’t necessarily put as much work in gets to be the one who presents the dish to the customer,” said Guidara. “Daniel and I came into this wanting to resolve that tension through trust—where, whether you’re in the kitchen or the dining room, you have the back of that person on the other side of the wall. For example, our lobster ‘Newberg’ is prepared in the kitchen, but the sauce is finished at the table by the server, which might make the final dish less perfect than if it were plated by a cook, but makes for a more fun customer experience.” It would be easier, Guidara said, for one person to be unequivocally in charge of Eleven Madison Park, but, with the fifty-fifty split, “it comes down to us all agreeing upon what’s the best thing for the restaurant as a whole. It transcends the older models.”

Meyer, the duo’s mentor, can testify to the uniqueness of his former charges’ partnership. “It’s rare to have that kind of ego drive coupled with the emotional intelligence to recognize that they need each other,” he said. “I mean, even Simon and Garfunkel dropped that at a certain point.”

It’s especially rare, in this chef-exalting age, for someone of Humm’s caliber to sublimate his ego to a greater good. Eleven Madison Park could easily be the Daniel Humm Show, full stop. He’s worthy of the attention: one of the most gifted chefs alive today, and one of the few in his prime (he’s 39) who came up the old way, Jacques Pépin-style, leaving school at age 14 to

apprentice in kitchen after kitchen in his native Switzerland, developing his skills one lonely mirepoix at a time. (A tall, loping figure, Humm was also a pro-level cyclist in his teens, which, he grants, goes a long way toward explaining his enduring competitiveness.) With or without Guidara, Humm would be a big deal.

Still, Humm told me, his own favorite restaurant experiences have never been explicitly about the haute exquisiteness of a famous chef's food. At Michel Bras' eponymous restaurant in Laguiole, France, he was taken with how the succession of meticulously composed courses on the tasting menu was interrupted by a big, sloppy wooden pot of *aligot*, a gooey regional dish of mashed potatoes blended with melted local cheese—"very rustic, a total departure from everything else," he said.

Where the food is concerned at a starred fine-dining restaurant, Humm said, "It's almost a given that everything is going to be perfect and creative. But the lasting memories are those other ones—when you kind of break out of that."

By Humm's reckoning, he and Guidara had met a handful

of restaurant Associates—the very job held by Joe Baum when that company owned the Four Seasons. Neither Guidara *père* nor *fils* ever worked with Baum, who died in 1998, but Will, a student of dining history, is well-versed in the lore of the flamboyant restaurateur, whose other New York brainchilds included the Roman-themed Forum of the Twelve Caesars, which used gladiator helmets as ice buckets and served roast chicken in a clay casing that was cracked open tableside. Guidara was an inspired choice to be the G.M. of Eleven Madison Park: warm yet wired, a Danny Meyer disciple with a little bit of Joe Baum hustle.

Guidara and Humm developed an easy rapport that each recognized was special, one critics picked up on, too. Frank Bruni of the *Times* awarded the restaurant three stars in 2007 and four stars two years later. In 2011, eager to scale still-dizzier heights, Humm and Guidara did the unprecedented and broke (amicably) from Meyer, rounding up some investors and buying Eleven Madison Park from him. (Three years later, Guidara changed his title from general manager to restaurateur.)



of times before they began working together, and always in a group setting. In 2006, Meyer recruited Humm from the Campton Place Restaurant in San Francisco, where he had attracted notice as a culinary wunderkind, to elevate the game of Eleven Madison Park—at that point, nine years into its existence, a pleasant but unassuming brasserie, its vibe incommensurate with the Fred Astaire-worthy room it occupied. Meyer's initial choice for the restaurant's general manager didn't work out, and as the chef and Meyer considered new options, they landed upon Guidara.

On a regular basis, Union Square Hospitality Group gathers the chefs and general managers from its various restaurants for meetings that include status reports and exchanges of ideas. It was during these meetings that Humm recognized a kindred spirit in the other super-young guy in the room, Guidara, who at that point, at age 25, was doing a bang-up job running the cafés at The Museum of Modern Art—not the Modern, the museum's chic, bustling ground-floor fine-dining spot, but its unheralded visitor-only concessions. Humm admired the energy and enterprise that Guidara brought to his unglamorous assignment. Meyer, too, saw great potential in him.

Guidara happens to be a second-generation restaurant man. His father, Frank, is the former CEO of Uno Chicago Grill, the pizzeria chain, and used to run Au Bon Pain. Back in the 1980s, Frank Guidara was in charge of the restaurant division of Res-

"Whether you're in the kitchen or dining room, you have the back of that person on the other side of the wall," says Guidara.

Freed from the mothership, Humm and Guidara changed the formula, reducing its offerings to a single tasting menu and deciding that it would serve regional cuisine, the region being New York State. This, Guidara stressed to me, is not a temporary theme; Eleven Madison Park, though it changes its menu quarterly, will not soon be cycling through Belle Époque and Nordic Now phases. "New York is what we are as a restaurant," he said. "New York is now old enough as a city and state to have enough history where there's actually things to grab onto."

Some of this regional emphasis is reasonably straightforward: serving a chilled local oyster elegantly enveloped in a mignonette-sauce gelée, or trolleying a manhattan cocktail cart to the table and letting the customer select from an assortment of whiskeys, vermouths, and bitters. And some of it is more elaborately conceived and Baum-like: a course of smoked sturgeon (like the pastrami, an homage to Jewish food) unveiled from a glass dome filled with a cloud of applewood smoke, and that lobster "Newberg," whose cream sauce is assembled tableside by a server while she pleasantly recounts the history of the dish, concluding her tale with a splash of cognac that sends flames skyward, making the most of those high ceilings.

This showmanship isn't for everyone, and Eleven Madison Park's existence, while charmed, has not been without its wobbles. The current *Times* critic, Pete Wells, though taken with Humm's food, finds the servers' sociohistorical narration

off-pitch. “By the end of the four hours,” Wells wrote after a visit in the early days of the restaurant’s regional reconception, “I felt as if I’d gone to a Seder hosted by Presbyterians.”

Guidara and Humm admit to having been wounded by this crack, but they took it to heart. They dialed back the level of scripted talk and trained their waitstaff to be psychologically nimble, adapting to the moods and receptiveness of diners. And the two partners are not reluctant to beat up on themselves, quashing concepts that sounded better in bull sessions than they turned out on the serving floor.

The custom potato chips, for example. Because potato chips are thought to have been invented in the upstate New York town of Saratoga Springs, Humm and Guidara had thought it would be cool to do a “chip course” near the top of the menu. At considerable expense, they had foil bags manufactured and filled with their own celery root chips. For about a week, every Eleven Madison Park customer was presented with a packet of these special-reserve chips with a cup of soup, until the two men themselves dined in their own restaurant—a regular part of their evaluation process—and we were like, “This is stupid, this feels gimmicky,” Humm said. “We went too far. So we pulled it.”

The line between transcendence and folly is thin, especially in a restaurant that goes as far out on a limb as Eleven Madison Park. But let me leave you with a lovely, ungimmicky moment in which the restaurant revealed the magic it is capable of—in which the front and back of the house colluded, with improvisatory flair, to deliver a moment of grace. The last time I went to Eleven Madison Park,

I brought a friend who, early in the course of our dinner conversation, mentioned that his family had once owned a brewery in the Bronx way back in the 19th century. The sommelier attending to us at that moment, Jon Ross, asked my friend what the brewery was called. My friend offered an answer, Ross nodded, and we gave the subject no further thought.

Until, that is, an hour or two later, when, as our table was being prepped for the cheese course, Ross returned with a pair of coasters bearing the logo of my friend’s family’s no-longer-extant brewery. “Wait, I’ve seen these, this is—,” my friend said, not finishing the thought, astonished at the sight before him. And then we were presented with two beer glasses bearing another of the old brewery’s logos—clearly a product of the same Google-imaging and laser-printing that had brought us the coasters.

It wasn’t just the retro stunt and the malty Red Wheelbarrow Ale (from Maine, not New York) that heightened our spirits. It was the carryover effect of bonhomie that the surprise had upon us as we were served our Cato Corner farmstead cheese, which was melted, fondue-style, inside a roasted, hollowed-out carnival squash. As my friend and I dunked soft pretzels into the cheese and ultimately tore apart the squash vessel, drinking the beer and inhaling the entire presentation like ravenous pythons, even though we’d eaten plenty already, I realized we were experiencing one of those moments that Humm had spoken of—where a big-deal meal becomes more than the sum of its courses. It becomes a lasting memory, a story to be fondly told for years to come. Which is exactly how Humm and Guidara, through their assiduous game-planning and mood-reading and choreography, had planned it all along. ■

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Keel, Achill Island, Co. Mayo; calveysachillmountainlamb.ie



IRELAND'S CULINARY COAST

Now's the time to visit the windswept hills of the **Wild Atlantic Way**, home to some of the country's most exciting artisanal producers

By Jody Eddy Photographs by Sandeep Patwal

Ireland has always been known more for its natural beauty and spirited people than for its food, but times are changing along the nation's 1,600-mile western coastline stretching from County Donegal in the north to West Cork in the south (called the Wild Atlantic Way). It offers a crazy tangle of a drive, full of extraordinary views from atop towering cliffs and inviting villages tucked snugly into nearly every twist. Because of a mix of geography and grit, new food artisans are emerging to join beloved businesses that have been around for decades. A road trip in the area has always promised to clear the mind. These days, it'll enliven the palate, too.

Shells Cafe and Little Shop

Myles (left) and Jane Lamberth searched the world for a restaurant location before settling on the surfing village of Strandhill. Shells Cafe has a breezy deck overlooking ocean waves that draw surfers from around the world. After a dip, you can tuck into the Lamberths' hearty dishes, like a peppery pulled pork shoulder piled high on toasted brioche with candy-sweet grilled tomatoes and hollandaise. While you (undoubtedly) wait for a table, head to the adjacent Little Shop, where you can browse shelves stocked with local products such as Mill Lane honey and Richmount elderflower cordial, or have a nibble of house-made baked goods to tide you over. Choose from cherry scones, bakewell tarts, and apple pies. Seafront, Strandhill, Co. Sligo; shellscafe.com





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Rigney's Farm

There's an enchanted ring of trees in the middle of Rigney's Farm, a B&B and family farm that opened in 2007 and raises rare-breed animals. "The cows come here to give birth," says co-owner Caroline Rigney. "I suppose it's because it's flat in the center, but I also like to think there's some energy at work from the past that brings them to 'the farm's maternity wing.'" She serves arriving guests scones hot from the oven and sells sweet-cured rashers and other products made from the farm's pigs. Guests can gather their own eggs for breakfast and feed the livestock with Caroline's husband, Joe, before venturing out on a hike through Curragh-chase Forest Park, a 700-acre wood that Alfred Lord Tennyson wandered for inspiration. rigneysfarm.com

Marty's Mussels

The tale of Marty's Mussels, which opened in 2000, is one of love—and not just for the acclaimed bivalves, farmed in the open waters of Killary Harbor. Marty and Catherine Nee, two of the business' founders, met as children when Catherine's family summered in the area. She never forgot the local boy who charmed her, and years later, gave up a high-profile marketing job in Paris to join him back in the quaint town of Renvyle. Three children and tons of mussels later, the couple supplies to many restaurants throughout the region and has founded the popular Connemara Mussel Festival, which takes place in May. Pick up mussels at the farm if you have the means to cook them—it's hard to find a fresher meal. *Lettergesh West, Renvyle, Connemara, Co. Galway; martyismussels.ie*



A Foraging Walk by the Sea

Seaweed once held an esteemed position in Irish culinary, medical, and agricultural traditions. Packed with healthful nutrients and minerals, it was appreciated for its texture and briny flavor in dishes, its rejuvenating properties in lotions and bath salts, and the fertilizing wonders it worked in the garden. The modern Irishman may have moved on from seaweed's virtues, but Prannie Rhatigan, a doctor and author of the book *The Irish Seaweed Kitchen*, is on a one-woman mission to change that. Take a seaweed identification walk with her along the Streedagh Coast. It usually begins at Eithna's by the Sea, a pioneering restaurant championing the culinary benefits of the algae. There, you can taste Prannie's carrageenan panna cotta, which gets its firm texture and faint saline taste from—what else?—local seaweed. irishseaweedkitchen.ie





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Hazel Mountain Chocolate

Owners Kasia (far left) and John Connolly, with help from chocolatier Ana Murphy (left), run the nation's first "bean-to-bar" chocolate factory in the foothills of County Clare, and its confections speak to their varied heritage. Ana is from Texas, Kasia from Poland, John from Ireland: The factory's café, where you can sample innovative dishes such as goat cheese and potato dumplings with sage cacao butter, is located next to the factory in his grandparents' former house. After a tour, head to the shop, where you can buy innovative chocolates featuring Irish seaweed as well as pecan pie truffles. *Oughtmama, Bellharbour, Co. Clare; hazelmountainchocolate.com*

Haven Smokehouse

Locals have been smoking salmon in an age-old way, using peat—known in these parts as turf—for as long as the cliffs here have been softened by the raging ocean. In 2013, Sue Cruse and Declan McConnellogue traded in their urban life in London to open a traditional fish smokehouse on the northern cusp of County Donegal. McConnellogue hangs his salmon from the ceiling in his hand-built smokehouse and cold-smokes it for two days, a process that yields a sweet, earthy flavor and clean mouth-feel. "It's best served unadulterated, without lemon, pepper, or bread," he says. "It tastes of the sea and earth and nothing else." *Claggan, Carrigart, Co. Donegal, tatuaseo.com/thehaven.html*



Kelly Oysters

"It's an old tradition in Ireland, but only recently have contemporary Irish begun to appreciate it," says Diarmuid Kelly of eating the country's oysters. Kelly Oysters was founded more than 60 years ago by his father, Michael, and now Diarmuid and his brother are part of the family business. Their coveted oysters are exported to places as far away as Dubai, and in raising and harvesting the shellfish, the family is keeping alive a tradition that goes back 1,000 years, to when the ancient kings of Connought feasted on oysters harvested from Galway Bay. If you're there in September, don't miss the Galway Oyster & Seafood Festival, an event that welcomes more than 30,000 people each year. *Aisling, Tyrone, Kilcolgan, Co. Galway; kellyoysters.com*

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Gubbeen

Gubbeen Farm, near the village of Schull in West Cork, has stood on the edge of the ocean for six generations, each passing down the traditional practices of their ancestors to keep alive a thriving, self-sustaining farm. The current caretakers are Tom and Giana Ferguson and their children, Fingal and Clovisse. Between the four of them, there's a cheese maker, charcuterie producer, gardener, and knife maker. Gubbeen's products, such as Ireland's first chorizo and a washed-rind cheese that has notes of bog, forest, and earthy mushrooms, are found in farmers' markets and stores throughout Ireland. On a visit, you might sample a warming bowl of bean and sausage stew from the on-site smokehouse, featuring tender pork infused with the flavor of the Celtic Sea, which roars just beyond the farmhouse doors. *Gubbeen, Schull, Co. Cork; gubbeen.com*

Bean and Sausage Stew

Serves 6

Active: 2 hr.; Total: 3 hr.

At Gubbeen Farm, a 250-acre coastal plot of land in West Cork, an Irish twist on French cassoulet results in a flavorful, brothy stew of lima beans and thin Irish pork sausages. You can also bake this stew in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, if you prefer.

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 lb. thin Irish or Italian pork sausages (about 14)
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into 6 wedges, plus 4 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced lengthwise
- 1 large carrot, cut into 6 pieces
- 1/2 leek, white and light green parts only, quartered crosswise
- 10 oz. dried lima beans, soaked overnight
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 rosemary sprig
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 5 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 6 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 1 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 Fresno chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. whole-grain mustard, plus more for serving
- 7 oz. stale sourdough bread

1 In a medium saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium. Working in batches, add the sausages and cook, turning, until browned but slightly undercooked, about 5 minutes. Transfer the sausages to a plate, halve crosswise, and return the pan to the heat.

2 Add the onion wedges, carrot, and leek and cook, stirring, until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Drain the beans and then stir them into the vegetables along with 1 thyme sprig, the rosemary, and 5 cups water. Bring the beans to a boil and then reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the beans are al dente, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and season the cooking liquid liberally with salt and

pepper. Let the beans stand until cooled to room temperature.

3 In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the sliced onions, garlic, and remaining thyme sprig. Season with salt and cook, stirring, until the onions are caramelized and soft, about 40 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and chile and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Stir in the mustard and then remove the pan from the heat.

4 Heat the oven to 350°. In a large bowl, combine the beans and their liquid with the sausages and caramelized onions until evenly mixed, and then divide among six 8-oz. ramekins set on a baking sheet. Meanwhile, in a food processor, pulse the bread until it forms coarse crumbs. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and pulse until the bread crumbs are evenly coated with oil. Sprinkle about 3 tablespoons bread crumbs evenly over each ramekin, and then bake until the bread crumbs are browned and the beans and sausage are warmed through and bubbly, about 1 hour. Serve hot with more mustard on the side.

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THE SEDUCTION OF STINK

By Fuchsia Dunlop

In one of China's heartlands, fermented foods surprise and delight—once you get over the initial shock.

The first time I had lunch in the eastern Chinese city of Shaoxing, I couldn't believe what I was eating. I'd gone there with some friends to investigate shaoxing wine, the mellow brew of fermented glutinous rice whose historical roots date back some 2,500 years. After a tour of a wine factory, we dropped in for lunch at the Xianheng Tavern, a restaurant specializing in traditional Shaoxing cooking that is run by chef and food-culture maven Mao Tian-yao. Given the rich diversity of China's food traditions, I was expecting Shaoxing to have its fair share of local delicacies. But nothing had prepared me for the sensory assault of the city's *chou mei*—"stinky and fermented"—flavors.

I'll skirt over the relatively run-of-the-mill "stinking tofu" (*chou dou fu*) and plunge right into those dishes that really amazed me. First, there was the ferment-

ed tofu skin, *mei qian zhang*, which can be translated as "fermented thousand layers" or, as the Xianheng menu describes it, "mildew and rotten" tofu skin. It looked innocent enough, arrayed in yellowish layers on a bed of minced pork and served right from the steamer, but it had a fetid, ammonia smell and a sharp, stinging taste that was both scary and bewitching. It was a little reminiscent of the rind of a very ripe Stilton, but at the same time utterly alien to Western palates. As I tasted it for the first time, my brain floundered amid contradictory impulses of disgust and desire.

Even more extraordinary were the fermented or "mildew and rotten" amaranth stalks (*mei xian cai geng*). These gray-green tubes of overgrown vegetation had a weird, stealthy smell unlike anything I'd previously encountered. Overcoming my revulsion, I put one in my mouth and,

following my host's instructions, sucked the fibrous tubes to extract the few shreds of decomposing green skin that clung to them and the soft, disintegrating pulp that filled them. The flavor was almost indescribable, rotten and pure, disturbing and momentarily delicious at the same time. I was hooked at first bite.

Within culinary circles, Shaoxing is celebrated as the old gastronomic heartland of Zhejiang, the southern province near Shanghai that forms part of the sophisticated Lower Yangtze region. Shaoxing is also famed as the center of the ancient Yue kingdom, the birthplace of the great modernist writer Lu Xun, and one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. Despite its illustrious history, the city is known less for its haute cuisine than for the humble fermented foods that are rooted in a history of hardship and thrifty living. Among them are dried, salt-fermented

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greens (*mei gan cai*), which have an umami taste that can be as strong as soy sauce. They are simmered in soups, steamed with pork, and used as a seasoning in stir-fries and braises. Small amounts of dried and salted fish, salt pork, and cured ham are all cooked with blander ingredients to lend them a delicious intensity of flavor. There is also the famous “yellow wine” (*huang jiu*), which is traditionally served in pewter jugs and is a perfect accompaniment to the strong-tasting local foods. Both the wine and the fermented rice grains left over from its making are used as kitchen seasonings.

The precise origins of many of these fermented specialties are obscure, but colorful legends fill the gaps in the written record. A local story dates the discovery of edible rotten amaranth stalks, for example, to the Spring and Autumn Period in the first millennium B.C., when the king of Yue was captured after a military defeat and taken as prisoner to the neighboring kingdom of Wu. The Yue state had been impoverished by war, and people had to grub around for wild vegetables to survive. During this time, so they say, an old man gathered some wild amaranth stalks, ate their tender leaves, and couldn't bear to throw away the tough, inedible stalks, so he stashed them in a clay pot. Some days later,

here is critical—too short, and the stalks remain hard; too long, and their skin and pulp simply dissolve away. Afterward salt-water is added, and they are left in the jar for another couple of days before being steamed and eaten. Shen brought out a basinful of the stalks in their *lu*, or fermenting brine, to show me. The stalks themselves had a faintly unpleasant odor, while the *lu*, green as a pea soup but pungent as a blocked latrine, smelled so disgusting that it made me want to vomit.

As it happens, though, the *lu* is the most important product of the fermentation, a master liquid that can be used to ferment and make stinky all kinds of other ingredients, including tofu, bamboo shoots, and gourds. Over my several visits to Shaoxing, Xianheng chef Mao fed me many of them, and they were all wildly exciting in that same disconcerting way. We ate steamed stinky gourd, stinky yu choy stalks stir-fried with amaranth leaves, stinky vegetable husks. I struggled to think of taste equivalents to these foods in other culinary traditions, although their heady, nice-nasty intensity reminded me of the thrill of durian, hung game, and smelly farmhouse cheeses.

Sadly, it seems that the appetite of Shaoxing locals for these smelly foods is fading. Only a generation ago, almost every-



The flavor was almost **INDESCRIBABLE, ROTTEN AND PURE,** disturbing and momentarily delicious at the same time

he noticed a beguiling aroma coming out of the jar. Hungry as he was, he took the stalks, steamed them, and found them to be uncommonly delicious.

One shocking origin myth concerns the Yue king Gou Jian, who spent three years in captivity after the war. The story is long, complex, and frankly too gross to tell in detail. Suffice it to say, it involves the Wu king's excrement and what Gou Jian did with it to solve the riddle of his illness and earn his freedom. When news of what had happened reached Yue, Gou Jian's countrymen felt sick with humiliation, and they decided to eat their rice with stinking foods from then on as a sign of their shame.

The heady, rotten flavors of my first lunch in Shaoxing made a deep impression on me, and I was back in the city a few months later, hungry for more. I queued up in the street for deep-fried stinky tofu slathered in chiles. The stalls aren't hard to find—you can smell them from two blocks away. By now addicted to rotten thousand layers, I ate them at almost every meal. And I visited a producer of fermented amaranth stalks, Shen Huanjiang, to find out how they were made.

Shen told me that amaranth plants are allowed to grow tall at the end of the season, and their waist-high stalks are gathered just before they go to seed, chopped into bite-sized chunks, and soaked in cold water until they become frothy. They are then rinsed, drained, and sealed in a clay jar to ferment. The timing

one in Shaoxing ate rotten amaranth stalks, and most people made rotten thousand layers at home. But with rising living standards and the ready availability of meat in the post-reform era, they are falling out of fashion. “It's mainly old people and peasants who eat them these days,” said a young man I chatted with in a local Starbucks. “By the next generation they'll be completely forgotten.”

They still inspire passion, however, in their devotees. Chef Mao, also the author of several books about Shaoxing's culinary culture, is rapturous in his descriptions of foods like stinking tofu, which he calls “an exotic among everyday things” with a “lovable stench.” His restaurant is committed to preserving the region's culinary heritage and offering a taste of old Shaoxing. And despite my initial trepidation, I think Shaoxing's stinky flavors are among the most thrilling I've come across in 20 years of eating in China. But how ironic if these delicious foods, once a critical part of the local diet, end up surviving only as occasional treats for curious thrill seekers and foreign visitors like me. ■

London-based writer Fuchsia Dunlop is the author of *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper: A Sweet-Sour Memoir of Eating in China* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).

They may not look pretty, but these fermented foods are intensely delicious. From left: stinking amaranth stalks, stinking tofu, steamed pork with fermented thousand layers, and stinking tofu in brine.

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AND THE WINE DESTINATION OF THE YEAR IS...

AUSTRALIA

Once exclusively overripe and robust, Aussie wines have mellowed into middle age: mature, chilled out, and sometimes straight-up weird (in the best way). Here's to the wine country of the moment, with its interesting offerings, diverse climates, and compelling winemakers

BY BRUCE SCHOENFELD PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEAN TIMMS



Winemakers in Australia's Barossa, like Abel Gibson of Ruggabellus (this page) and Fraser McKinley of Sami-Odi (opposite bottom), are making some of the world's most interesting wines. Kerri Thompson (opposite top) crafts exquisite rieslings in the up-and-coming Clare Valley.



W

as he wrong? Had time passed him by? These were things Charlie Melton needed to know.

It was 1997. For more than a decade, Melton had been making fragrant, intricate shirazes and old-vine grenaches in Australia's Barossa Valley. The Charles Melton Nine Popes, a New World version of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, had earned a reputation as one of the country's most coveted bottlings. But the Barossa was changing around him. Grapes were being left to ripen nearly to desiccation, creating bolder, heftier, more potent wines.

These souped-up concoctions—some as thick as syrup, delivering the high-alcohol kick of a cocktail—earned top scores from powerful American critics. They eventually came to define Australian wine the world over, leaving winemakers like Melton perplexed. What happened to drinkability? What happened to balance?

"It became a test of manliness," he said when I visited him at his unassuming wooden winery off a country lane in the Barossa. "How long could you keep the grapes on the vine? How ripe could they get?" I knew what he meant. At about the same time, one of the trendiest Barossa producers had visited me in Colorado. He'd pushed aside the wine I'd set out and placed his own, extra-heavy bottle on the table. "Try this," he'd said. "The alcohol's 17.1, but you can't tell." I could tell.

Hearing my story, Melton opened one of his last remaining bottles of 1989 Nine Popes. A quarter-century old, it was dusty like a relic. Yet its ethereal freshness reminded me far more of wines I'd had in, say, France's Rhône Valley than of those stereotypical brutes of the Barossa.

Just a few years ago, such wines were panned as insubstantial. Today, they're acclaimed by critics and coveted by consumers in Australia and beyond. More than that, they've become the model for an emerging generation of winemakers, who value freshness and fineness far more than heft. Melton doesn't gloat. He's busy trying to keep up with all the new wines he's suddenly eager to drink.

Forgive the blasphemy, Francophiles and Italy lovers, but right now Australia



Hentley Farm (right), a restaurant in the Barossa, is one of several culinary destinations in the valley. Delicate flounder in lemon-caper sauce (above, see page 55 for recipe) is served with crunchy croutons.

is the world's most interesting place for wine. And why not? It's a country that fills a continent. It has a wine region for every space on a chessboard and producers with roots in the 1800s. Because the sap-sucking phylloxera louse hasn't wreaked the same havoc in Australia as it has in Europe, vines many decades old are commonplace there. And lately, young winemakers have been experimenting with varieties well beyond Aussie stalwarts shiraz, grenache, chardonnay, and sémillon. There are pinot noirs from Mornington Peninsula as intriguing as any outside Burgundy. Winemakers in the far-western region of Margaret River are redefining Australian cabernet sauvignon. And emerging areas such as the Adelaide Hills are giving an antipodean twist to obscure French and Italian grapes from savagnin to dolcetto.

Australian wines today are easy to drink and exciting to contemplate. Better still, they offer a genuine local voice. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Barossa, a 650-square-mile zone an hour from the city of Adelaide. During the height of the points-chasing scramble, not even Napa was identified more with ripeness and power. Yet there are more than 30 soil types in the Barossa. The daily temperatures in the warmest and coolest spots can vary by 10 degrees. Such diverse sites shouldn't produce only shiraz in a single style.

There's still shiraz, much of it plenty ripe, in the valley. But momentum is growing for wines that resemble Melton's—and for those from other producers, such as Rockford and



St Hallett, that never confused bigger with better. “We have old-vine shiraz and grenache,” Melton said. “That will always be our calling card. But now we also have the wonderful balance of these young, wild guys.”

On the porch of Abel Gibson's Ruggabellus winery in Eden Valley, which doubles as his family's home, a grill shares space with a washing machine. An antique stove heats the two-bedroom residence. “Our expectations are more modest than the previous generation's,” he said when I visited him. “We're not expecting wine to make us rich.”

His father tended vines at Penfolds, one of Australia's iconic producers, but Gibson found village life stultifying. He set out for New Zealand, Canada, Spain, Belize, Guatemala, Mexico. In each place, he tried to figure out what made it special.

Now he steps off his porch onto seven acres of dips and hills. The dirt here is ancient: It derives from rocks 700 million years old. The ridges have eroded to bumps; there's not a hard angle in sight. “The landscape I returned to was incredibly appealing,” said Gibson, a self-taught enologist. “It was right there all that time, this mystical, enduring place that has been exposed to the elements for hundreds of millions of years. I just couldn't see it.”

In its way, he now knows, the Barossa is as singular as anywhere he traveled. “This is an old-soul place,” he said. “If you make wines that are all jam and alcohol, you're missing it.” As we talked, we drank an ethereal grenache, then a mataró-based blend that tasted of iron, like blood in the mouth. His shiraz, which he calls syrah, cracked with energy. He explained his goal: “wines that make you feel good when you drink them.”

I found those, too, when I visited Fraser McKinley at the garage-like space that is Sami-Odi. With vines planted before World War I from the Hoffmann Dallwitz Vineyard, he makes one or two shirazes annually in squat bottles with extended necks.

The wines were works in progress, anything but polished. They were filled with the tension that comes when intent meets reality. “I'd like to make a wine that tastes like beaujolais,” he told me. “If I could do that, I'd be over the moon.” There was beaujolais brightness in the 2013 Odi, but also



Prawns with Edamame Slaw and Carrot-Miso Sauce

Serves 4 as a starter

Total: 40 min.

Carrot juice and white miso make a sweet umami dressing for jumbo prawns and a spicy slaw of radish and edamame in this recipe adapted from chef Ryan Edwards of Appellation restaurant in Barossa, Australia.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrot juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 Tbsp. finely grated ginger
- 1 Tbsp. white miso
- $5\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shelled edamame beans
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely julienned radishes, plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup radish slices
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely julienned carrots
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely julienned scallions
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. fresh lime juice
- 4 large prawns (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.), head and shell on

1 In a small saucepan, combine the carrot and orange juices and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook the juices, stirring, until reduced by two-thirds, about 10 minutes. Whisk in the ginger and miso, and then remove the pan from the heat and whisk in 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of the butter until smooth. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to a bowl.

2 In a small saucepan of boiling water, add the edamame and cook until just tender, 1 to 2 minutes. Drain and transfer to a bowl of ice water to chill. Drain again, transfer to paper towels, and dry thoroughly. Place the edamame in a bowl and toss with the julienned and sliced radishes, carrots, scallions, oil, and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper and let stand for 10 minutes.

3 In a 12-inch skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons butter over medium-high. Add the prawns and cook, turning once, until lightly browned and just cooked through, about 6 minutes. Spread two-thirds of the slaw onto a small platter and top with the prawns. Drizzle the prawns with the carrot-miso sauce and top with the remaining slaw to serve.



Venison loin with sweet stewed quince (left, see page 55 for recipe), is ideal with Jamsheed Seville Syrah 2012. (See page 53 for other incredible Australian wines.) An old basket press (above) at Rockford Wines in Barossa; winemaker Charlie Melton at his winery's restaurant (below).

The Mornington Peninsula, outside of Melbourne, may be Australia's best wine region for food. Go to saveur.com/mornington-peninsula for more on this up-and-coming region.



the meatiness of the Barossa. The Baby Tui, from 2012, was named after his newborn daughter. McKinley seemed almost despondent discussing the wine. He intended it to have 12 degrees of alcohol; instead, the wine approached 15. "I don't know what happened," he said, apologetically.

The more I lingered with it, the more its name seemed appropriate. It was clumsy, like a newborn. Yet each sip brought something I can only describe as a beam of sunlight. I told McKinley I didn't know shiraz could have that. He flashed a sheepish smile. "That's the fruit," he said. "It doesn't have anything to do with me."

Like almost everything else in the Barossa, wine here is an informal pleasure. You could take a tour at Penfolds or Seppeltsfield, and you could probably spend \$500 on a fancy bottle at a restaurant where they'd make you dress up for dinner. But mostly, a week among its towns and hillsides means tasty sips in unexpected settings, like at a sandwich shop with lunch or at a casual Friday gathering of winemakers you stumble across behind a local bakery.

I had Tim Smith's aromatic viognier at Home of the Brave, a tapas bar in a tin shed, where the ambience included an inflatable penguin and G-strings available for purchase. Another afternoon, I visited Artisans of Barossa. Started in 2011 by seven producers who were too small to handle visitors alone, it's a tasting room and community hangout with serious food. I stood at the bar watching ad men in button-downs nibble empanadas and lamb flatbread, hard at work at a Thursday happy hour. They seemed oblivious to whatever was in their glasses, but to me, nearly everything I tasted was a revelation. These wines were vital, energetic. Many consisted of varieties I never thought I'd find beyond European backwaters: aglianico, clairette, durif, graciano, ugni blanc, alone and in fascinating combinations.

Life existed in the Barossa for ages before anyone much cared about its wine, and that history keeps it feeling genuine, like somewhere you might drive to from Adelaide just for a few good meals, a spa treatment, a bit of sunshine. Then you stop in to see a winemaker—maybe Rojomoma's Bernadette Kaeding, a talented photographer who displays her works beside her steel tanks—and drink an otherworldly shiraz that tastes like blackberries. And you realize you are in the midst of one of the world's foremost wine areas.

The Louise in Marananga is a Relais & Châteaux hotel. Among its attractive offerings—infinity pool, outdoor show-ers, boules court—is a hefty wine list at its restaurant called, tellingly, Appellation. One afternoon I lost myself to its 50-odd pages. It's one of the few wine lists I'd ever describe as playful. Each time I came across a selection of five or six wines from a renowned producer, it would invariably be countered by something quirky and unexpected from Tasmania or Great Western or Margaret River. The cumulative effect managed to be both comic and dramatic, like a John Irving novel.

I found an equally interesting list at, of all places, a Vietnamese-inflected restaurant with *(continued on page 57)*

10 Aussie Wines TO DRINK RIGHT NOW

Get these eye-opening Australian wines from your local wine shop or wineseacher.com.

White

Wines By KT Churinga Vineyard Riesling 2014 CLARE VALLEY

A riesling on the level of the best from Germany or Austria. From 60-year-old vines, it shows peach, grapefruit, granite, and an intrigue that will compound with age. winesbykt.com; \$22

Tahbilk 1927 Marsanne 2006 GOULBURN VALLEY

Tahbilk has been around for 90 years, yet its top-shelf Marsanne might be mistaken for a hipster bottling. Made from grapes grown on perhaps the oldest Marsanne vines in the world. tahbilk.com.au; \$43

Frankland Estate Smith Cullam Riesling 2012 GREAT SOUTHERN

Off-dry rieslings are easy to denigrate, until you try one that tastes like key lime pie with an electric current running through it—and pairs with everything from duck confit to halibut. franklandestate.com.au; \$65

BK Wines Swaby Chardonnay 2013 ADELAIDE HILLS

At the second or third sip you'd swear this was French—but too creamy for Chablis, too racy for the Côte d'Or. A New World wine with European grace. bkwines.com.au; \$39

Giaconda Estate Vineyard Chardonnay 2012 BEECHWORTH

It smells like burnt matches, and then peaches and smoke, and then walnuts. Like no other chardonnay in the world. giaconda.com.au; \$102

Red

Ruggabellus Efferus 2012 BAROSSA

This wine is marginally civilized. A blend of three-quarters mataró with syrah and grenache, it tastes like a T-bone steak with a blackberry glaze. ruggabellus.com.au; \$40

Jamsheed Seville Syrah 2012 YARRA VALLEY

For anyone seeking a pure manifestation of the syrah or shiraz grape, Gary Mills' efforts are a revelation. jamsheed.com.au; \$55

Ochota Barrels The Fugazi Vineyard Grenache 2013 MCLAREN VALE

There's no jam here, just high-toned fruit and crisp acidity. If one bottling from the emerging generation of Australian garage-winemakers is an archetype, this might be it. ochotabarrels.com; \$58

Jasper Hill Georgia's Paddock Shiraz 2010 HEATHCOTE

Few shirazes can pull off robust tannin, sour cherry flavors, Old World earthiness, and modest (14 percent) alcohol like this one. jasperhill.com.au; \$72

Mount Langi Ghiran Langi Shiraz 2013 GRAMPIANS

From the no-man's-land of western Victoria, it manages to be both plush and weightless in the mouth, full of herbal autumnal notes, yet sweet like a ripe plum. langi.com.au; \$84



Grilled Octopus with Green Lentils and Romesco

Serves 4 to 6

Active: 1 hr. 20 min.; Total: 2 1/2 hr.

Smoky romesco sauce brightens burnished, crispy octopus, which is marinated in an herb-packed vinaigrette, in this recipe adapted from chef Dan Moss of Terroir Auburn restaurant in Clare Valley, Australia.

For the octopus and lentils:

- 2 lbs. fresh or frozen octopus tentacles
- 1 1/2 cups packed flat-leaf parsley leaves (1 cup finely chopped, 1/2 cup torn in half)
- 1 cup packed cilantro leaves, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. packed oregano leaves, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lime
- 3 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 1 shallot, halved lengthwise
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 1 cup dried green lentils
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 cup basil leaves, preferably Thai, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1/2 cup loosely packed mint leaves, torn in half
- 1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced lengthwise

For the romesco:

- 2 large red bell peppers
- 3 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 1 cup blanched white almonds
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1/4 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- 1/4 tsp. smoked paprika

1 For the octopus: Bring a large pot of water to a boil, add the octopus, and cook until tender, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, stir the finely chopped parsley with the cilantro, oregano, olive oil, vinegar, chile flakes, garlic, and lime zest and juice; you should have 1 cup chimichurri. Scoop out 1/3 cup of the chimichurri



and transfer to a small bowl. When the octopus is tender, drain and transfer it to the bowl with the remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ cup chimichurri and toss to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and let marinate for at least 4 hours.

2 Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, bring the stock, shallot, and bay leaf to a boil. Add the lentils, and then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook the lentils, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and season with salt. Scrape into a large bowl and let cool completely. Once cool, stir the reserved $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chimichurri into the lentils.

3 For the romesco: Heat the broiler. Place the bell peppers and garlic on a foil-lined baking sheet and broil, turning as needed, until blistered all over, 6 to 8 minutes for the garlic, 15 minutes for the peppers. Transfer the peppers and garlic to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let stand for 20 minutes to steam. Uncover and then peel the peppers and garlic, discarding the peppers' seeds and stems as well. Place the pepper flesh and garlic in a blender along with the almonds, olive oil, tomato paste, vinegar, chile flakes, paprika, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, and purée until smooth. Scrape into a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and refrigerate until ready to use.

4 To serve, light a grill or heat a cast-iron grill pan over high. Lift the octopus tentacles from the marinade and place on the grill. Cook the tentacles, turning once, until charred and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer the octopus to a cutting board and let stand for 5 minutes. Spoon the lentils onto a serving platter and then cut the octopus into 2-inch pieces and place over the lentils. In a bowl, toss the torn parsley with the basil, mint, and onion, and scatter over the octopus. Serve with the romesco sauce on the side.

Venison Loins with Shallot Sauce and Stewed Quince

Serves 4 to 6; 📖 Page 52

Active: 1 hr. 10 min.; Total: 3 hr.

Similar to applesauce served with pork, this recipe, adapted from chef Stuart Bell of Ten Minutes by Tractor restaurant in Mornington Peninsula, Australia, uses sweet, spiced quince to balance faintly gamy venison loin served atop a creamy shallot sauce.

For the stewed quince:

- 1 orange**
- 1 lemon**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. quince, peeled and quartered**
- 2 cups dry white wine**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt**
- 2 cinnamon sticks**

- 2 whole cloves**
- 1 rosemary sprig**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ whole star anise pod**
- One 1-inch piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced**

For the shallot sauce and venison:

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 4 cups thinly sliced shallots**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 2 rosemary sprigs, stems removed**
- 2 thyme sprigs, stems removed**
- 1 garlic clove, smashed and peeled**
- 1 cup chicken stock**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 8 Tbsp. unsalted butter**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- Two 12-14-oz. venison loins**
- Finely grated zest of 1 orange**
- Flaky sea salt, for serving**

1 For the stewed quince: Using a vegetable peeler, peel the zest from the orange and lemon in strips and cut the strips lengthwise into a fine julienne. In a medium saucepan, combine the julienned zests with the quince, wine, sugar, salt, cinnamon, cloves, rosemary, star anise, and ginger. Juice the lemon and add the juice to the pan along with 2 cups water. Bring the syrup to a boil, and then reduce the heat to maintain a slow simmer. Cook until a paring knife inserted through the middle of each quince comes out easily and the cooking liquid is reduced to a loose glaze, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

2 For the shallot sauce: In a 12-inch skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over medium. Add the shallots, 1 bay leaf, 1 rosemary sprig, 1 thyme sprig, and the garlic and cook, stirring, until the shallots start to caramelize, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the stock and cook until reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the cream and $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter. Discard the bay leaves and herb stems and purée the sauce in a blender until smooth. Scrape into a bowl and season with kosher salt and pepper.

3 In a 12-inch skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil over high. Season the venison with salt and pepper and add to the skillet. Cook the loins, turning, until browned all over, about 6 minutes. Add the remaining $5\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons butter, rosemary and thyme sprigs, bay leaf, and the orange zest and cook, spooning the melted butter over the loins, until medium-rare, about 10 minutes (or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the loins reads 140°).

4 Transfer the loins to a cutting board and let stand for 10 minutes to rest. Using a slotted spoon, lift the quince and transfer to a cutting board. Remove the cores, and then cut each

quarter into 4 wedges. Place the quince in a serving bowl and pour its cooking liquid over top, discarding the herbs and spices. Cut the loins across the grain into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slices and arrange on a serving platter. Season the venison with flaky sea salt and pepper and serve alongside the quince and shallot sauce.

Flounder with Lemon-Caper Sauce

Serves 6 as a starter; 📖 Page 50

Total: 45 min.

This version of classic fish à la meunière, adapted from a recipe by chef Stuart Deller of Port Phillip Estate restaurant in Mornington Peninsula, Australia, adds crisp croutons and briny capers to the tangy lemon, parsley, and brown butter sauce.

- 1 slice white country bread, crust removed, torn into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces**
- 2 lemons**
- 8 Tbsp. unsalted butter**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour**
- Four 6-oz. flounder fillets**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 cups loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped, plus whole leaves, to garnish**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup capers, drained and rinsed**

1 Heat the oven to 350° . Spread the bread out on a baking sheet and bake, tossing occasionally, until deep golden brown, about 25 minutes. Transfer the croutons to a rack and let cool. Meanwhile, finely grate the zest from the lemons into a small bowl. Using a paring knife, cut off the top and bottom of each lemon and remove the white pith. Cut between the membranes of the lemon to release the segments into the bowl with the zest, and then squeeze the juice from the membrane into the bowl; discard the membrane.

2 In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat 4 tablespoons of the butter over medium-high. Place the flour on a plate, and then season the flounder with salt and pepper and dredge it lightly in the flour, knocking off the excess. Add the fillets to the butter and cook, turning once, until golden brown and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes.

3 Using a spatula, transfer each fillet to a plate and return the skillet to medium-high heat. Add the remaining 4 tablespoons butter and cook, swirling the skillet, until it begins to smell nutty and turn brown. Stir in the lemon zest, segments, and juice along with the chopped parsley and capers and remove from the heat. Season with salt and pepper and then spoon the lemon sauce over the fillets and top with the croutons and parsley leaves.



Grilled Lamb Chops and Squash with Herb Salad and Sunchoke

Serves 6 as a starter

Total: 50 min.

Blanching the squash pieces in this dish, adapted from a recipe by chef Dan Moss, helps to tenderize their skins and flesh so they're not undercooked when the outside is grilled to perfection. A creamy sunchoke purée and tart herb salad round out the grilled squash and lamb chops.

- 1 lb. sunchoke, scrubbed clean
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground white pepper
- 1 acorn squash, halved lengthwise, seeds removed, and flesh cut into 12 wedges
- 5 Tbsp. olive oil
- 6 lamb forequarter chops, cut 1-inch thick
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ½ lemon
- ¼ cup torn basil leaves
- ¼ cup torn mint leaves
- ¼ cup torn flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 6 lemon thyme sprigs, stems removed

1 In a medium saucepan, cover the sunchoke with cold water by 3 inches and bring to a boil. Cook the sunchoke until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain the sunchoke and transfer to a blender. Add the cream, season with salt and white pepper, and purée until smooth. Spoon the sunchoke purée onto a platter.

2 In a medium saucepan of boiling, salted water, add the squash and cook until just tender, about 4 minutes. Drain and transfer the squash to paper towels to cool and dry thoroughly. In a small bowl, toss the cooled squash with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil.

3 Light a grill or heat a cast-iron grill pan over high. Add the squash and cook, turning once, until lightly charred and cooked through, about 6 minutes. Transfer the squash to a plate and keep warm. Season the lamb chops with salt and black pepper, brush with 2 tablespoons olive oil, and then grill, turning once, until cooked to medium-rare, about 5 minutes. Arrange the lamb chops and squash over the sunchoke purée.

4 Using a vegetable peeler, peel and julienne the lemon's zest and juice the lemon. In a small bowl, whisk the juice with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil, and then add the zest along with the basil, mint, parsley, and thyme and toss until evenly coated in the dressing. Season with salt and pepper, and then sprinkle the herbs and zest over the lamb and squash just before serving.



Australian Wine Regions

Worth Visiting

BAROSSA VALLEY

Australia's most renowned region has added stylistic breadth to its muscular shiraz.

CLARE VALLEY

Some of the country's (and the world's) best rieslings—plus fresh, crunchy reds.

TASMANIA

On this temperate island, popular sparkling wines have been overtaken by cool-climate pinot noir and chardonnay.

HEATHCOTE

In a pocket of high elevation outside Melbourne, the vines here turn out firm, age-worthy shiraz.

ADELAIDE HILLS

The highlands above the city are a workshop for experimental winemakers.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

With incredible food destinations, this area southeast of Melbourne may also be the world's next great pinot noir region.

YARRA VALLEY

Elegant reds and whites from historic properties along the Yarra River are now back in vogue.

MARGARET RIVER

In the very western part of the country, nuanced cabernets and more are made by surfing winemakers.

(continued from page 53) the groan-inducing name of fermentAsian. With a glance, I spotted Georgian rkatsiteli, riesling from the fabled Austrian producer Nikolaihof, and page after page of Australian wines I longed to try. I drank a few with the winemaker Marco Cirillo while eating dishes I'd never seen, such as *thit lon cuon la lot*—betel leaves with spicy caramelized pork. The spring rolls, served with herbs, rendered previous versions I'd eaten comparatively dull and forgettable.

Later, Cirillo drove me to the Tanunda Kegel Club. The Barossa was settled by Prussians in the 1840s and its Germanic heritage still manifests itself in locally made mettwurst and busy *konditoreien* (cafés). But kegel, the bowling game, is surely the oddest remnant. It was introduced to South Australia by early settlers and was on the verge of extinction there—and, as far as anyone knows, everywhere—until a group of young wine professionals decided it made a fine way to spend a Thursday night.

The fee to play was \$10 and a bottle. The money went toward upkeep of the facility, which consisted of a paneled room with seats for spectators, an office, and the alley. The wine lubricated the proceedings. When we arrived, they were winding down. Among the players were Adam McLean of Rockford Wines, whose father had been the guiding spirit behind St Hallett. I saw far more bottles than people there to consume them. That's typical in the Barossa. "You grab a few from the cellar and bring them along," Cirillo explained. "It's not a long conversation about wine. It's 'This is really good.'"

We talked and sipped. I heaved some balls. Soon it was nearly midnight. The cumulative effect of all that wine had me longing for my bed at The Louise. Still, I was conflicted: This was life in the Barossa, genuine and unadorned, and I had no idea when I'd be back. Finally we headed out and I turned to wave a last goodbye. There was McLean, backlit in the doorway, twisting the cap off yet another bottle, ready to pour.



The Barossa is famous anywhere wine is consumed, but most of Australia's grape-growing regions lie somewhere on the spectrum between underrated and utterly unknown. For a certain type of thirsty, curious enthusiast, they're wine's next frontier.

The Clare Valley sits an hour north of Tanunda, yet it feels surprisingly remote. The end of my Barossa visit coincided with the Clare's annual Gourmet Weekend, an oversized county fair with world-class wine. It seemed like an ideal opportunity to experience the backside of the revolution.

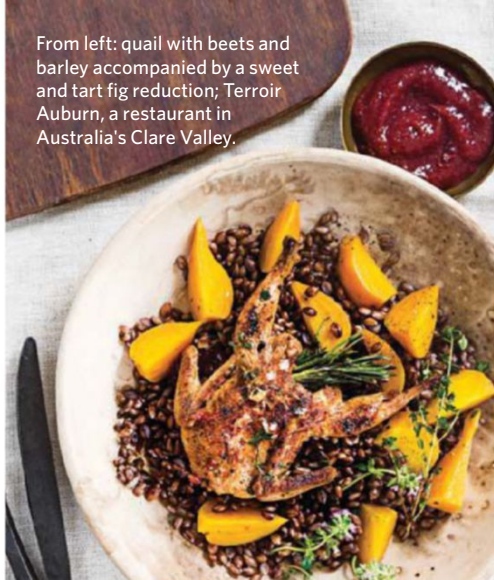
When I arrived, the valley smelled like autumn in New England—crisp, with woodsmoke in the air. I ate oysters on the lawn at Pikes, then barrel-tasted its rieslings, sharp and gummy. I visited Colin McBryde of Adelina, who poured wines made from obscure Italian varieties. Then I went to see Kerri Thompson.

In her early 40s, Thompson straddles Australian wine's generational divide. Nine years after starting Wines by KT, she produces rieslings that compete with the country's best, but she makes so few bottles, they're almost impossible to get in Adelaide, let alone America. "We don't have the cachet of the Barossa," she explained when I found her at a community lawn-bowls club in Watervale, pouring for festival-goers. "There's far less capital investment, far less tourism." I wasn't sure if that was an admission or a boast.

Terroir Auburn, the Clare's best restaurant, was catering from the patio. I spent \$10 on chimichurri-spiced octopus with green lentils and smoked kale. Thompson gave me her rieslings. Three were dry, two were sweet, and each showed more zing and lemon-meringue juiciness than the one before. Next came a cabernet from the Churinga Vineyard with a brick-wall structure, like a sangiovese, coupled with the same racing energy of her rieslings.

I had one chunk of spicy octopus left, so I ate it with a big sip. It was a pairing as unconventional as some of the wines I'd been drinking all week. I wouldn't have thought to recommend it. It happened to be delicious. ■

From left: quail with beets and barley accompanied by a sweet and tart fig reduction; Terroir Auburn, a restaurant in Australia's Clare Valley.



Sautéed Quail with Black Barley, Beets, and Fig Sauce

Serves 4

Active: 1½ hr.; Total: 12 hr.

Mustard-and-herb-marinated quail gets a quick sauté for this earthy dish and is served with poached beets and a sweet-tart fig and ruby port sauce. Adapted from a recipe by chef Stuart Bell, the dish has black barley, a variety with the bran still attached to the wheat kernel.

For the quail and barley:

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 5 rosemary sprigs (1 stem removed; 4 left whole)
- 5 thyme sprigs (1 stem removed; 4 left whole)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 garlic cloves minced
- 4 deboned quail (1 lb.)
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup black barley (amazon.com)
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

For the fig sauce and beets:

- 4 Black Mission figs, quartered
- 3 Tbsp. red wine
- 3 Tbsp. ruby port
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1½ Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 shallot, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2¼ lbs. golden baby beets, trimmed
- 6 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 3 Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 rosemary sprig
- 1 thyme sprig
- 1 garlic clove, smashed and peeled

1 For the quail: In a large bowl, whisk the olive oil with the mustard, rosemary

leaves, thyme leaves, bay leaves, and garlic. Add the quail, toss to coat, and cover with plastic wrap. Marinate the quail in the refrigerator for 12 hours.

2 For the barley: In a large saucepan of boiling, salted water, add the barley and cook until al dente, about 30 minutes. Drain and transfer the barley to a bowl, cover, and keep warm.

3 For the fig sauce: In a small saucepan, combine the figs with the wine, port, 1 tablespoon sugar, the lemon juice, and shallot, and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Cook the figs, stirring, until broken down, about 8 minutes. Transfer the figs into a blender and purée until smooth. Scrape the fig purée into a bowl and season with salt and pepper.

4 For the beets: In a medium saucepan, combine the remaining 1 tablespoon sugar with the beets, both vinegars, bay leaf, rosemary and thyme sprigs, garlic, and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil, and then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, and cook until the beets are tender, about 30 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the beets to a cutting board and let cool for 5 minutes. Peel and halve the beets, then return them to the cooking liquid. Let the beets stand until cooled to room temperature and then drain from the cooking liquid and toss with the barley in a bowl. Divide the barley and beets between 4 serving plates.

5 In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet, heat the butter over medium-high. Remove the quail from the marinade, and season with salt and pepper. Stuff each quail with 1 rosemary sprig, and then add the quail to the skillet, breast side down, and cook, turning once, until lightly browned and cooked to medium, about 5 minutes. Transfer each quail to a plate on top of the barley and beets, garnish each with a thyme sprig, and serve with the fig sauce on the side.

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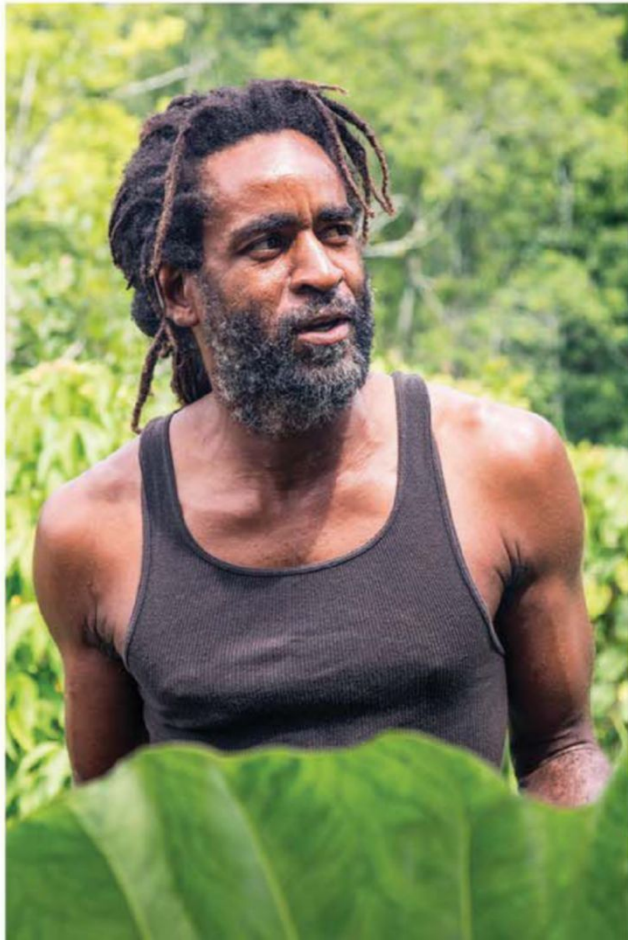
TRANSFORMING FOODWAYS



Braised oxtail with butter beans (see page 64 for recipe) from the kitchen of Mama J (opposite, top right) is a classic Jamaican dish. Farmers like Chris Binns (opposite, bottom left) are trying to get Jamaicans to buy homegrown foods again.



Jamaica



How a music industry icon and a crop of visionary farmers are revitalizing the island's homegrown food scene

By Yaran Noti Photographs by Matt Taylor-Gross



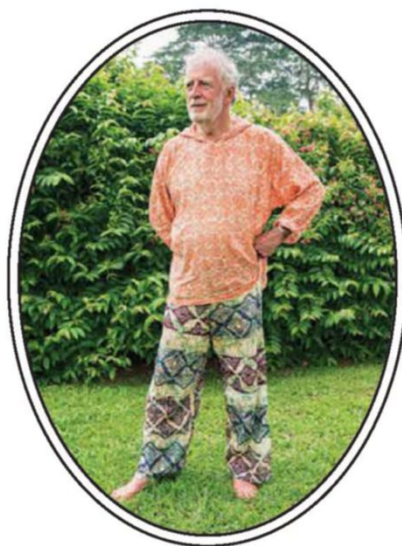
I've developed a theory about Scotch bonnets," Chris Blackwell tells me, liberally spooning the raw, minced, scorching-hot peppers over the jerk lamb chops on his plate. "They keep the mosquitoes away. I never get touched." He offers me some as we sit for lunch under an enormous guango tree on the grounds of Pantrepant, his 2,500-acre farm in rural Jamaica. I oblige with a pinch, mindful of the heat these little peppers pack.

Blackwell is white, speaks with smooth British diction, and, as a former big-shot music executive who founded Island Records, casually begins stories with otherworldly phrases like "I saw Mick last night" (Jagger, of course, whose birthday he celebrated at a party in New York before flying in). But Blackwell was raised in Jamaica, and when he speaks about food, his undeniable Jamaican-ness comes through. Like every other islander I've encountered, he's quick to praise food not just for its flavor, but for its power. A few days before, Lanky, a fisherman in the village of Oracabessa on the north side of the island, insisted to me that black mangoes make you sweat. A farmer I met in Free Hill is convinced that the roots of the coco plant, a relative of taro, put "lead in your pencil" (tips for enhancing virility come up so frequently they start to feel like prescriptions for a problem I didn't realize I had). And then there are the yellow yams of Trelawny Parish, responsible, according to some, for sprinter and native son Usain Bolt's world-record-breaking speed.

So Blackwell's farm is part bustling green market, part spice rack, and part medicine cabinet. The onetime plantation has cattle and sheep, a small dairy, and a kitchen garden where Blackwell grows his beloved Scotch bonnets along with calaloo (a spinach-like green), herbs, lettuces, and dozens of other fruits and vegetables. His cooks use these ingredients in their versions of the island's iconic foods, all without written records or recipes. And in Jamaican country style, sometimes they brew potions, as I learned earlier that day when I was offered tea and got a giant plant I couldn't identify steeping in hot water. "Bush tea," Blackwell said, smiling.

Mama J, a shy, soft-spoken woman,

runs the farm's kitchen (she was taught by Blackwell's personal cook, Talcie Neil, whose recipes she prepares) and her lunchtime feast comes late in the afternoon—according to life on Planet Pantrepant, lunch falls vaguely between afternoon swim time and smoking-pot-on-the-porch time. The charred bits of her grilled, piquant jerk lamb are the tastiest, and I gnaw her fricassee chicken, perfumed with thyme, to the bone. The thick savory gravy from the oxtail, stewed with onions and butter beans, pools under the rice and red beans sitting next to it on the plate—it's an ideal match. These are the Jamaican dishes you read about, the simple, old-style ones with sharp flavors. It's "street food," as Blackwell respectfully calls it, but here I am eating



it on a gorgeous estate, rolling pastures unfurling in front of me all the way to the horizon.

For a nation that reveres its local ingredients, its people aren't eating as much of them as they used to. Over the past decades, food imports have steadily risen as domestic tastes have turned toward processed goods. At the many roadside snack shacks throughout Jamaica, sugary bottled drinks are plentiful; homegrown bananas and oranges, not so much.

"When I was growing up, there weren't the foreign options there are now," Blackwell says, with a forkful of rice. "It was all local food. Now Jamaican food is not as accessible to Jamaicans because of the imports, which in many cases are mass-produced and cheaper."

Blackwell, a hospitality magnate with

six hotels on the island, is doing his part to make Jamaican food a central piece of the Jamaican tourism story. He is the cuisine's booster—supplying the kitchens at his resorts with domestically grown crops as best he can, and serving refined versions of Jamaican food without gentrifying it. "Jamaican food isn't suited to be 'designed' food," he says. "It's kind of a workman's lunch—some rice and peas, some plantain. When people give it a 'designed' aesthetic, it looks silly."

Other farmers, such as Chris Binns, are turning back to the land not just to promote Jamaican food, but to reinvent it. At his farm, an operation called Stush in the Bush ("stush" being Jamaican slang for chic), he and his wife, Lisa, grow standard Jamaican fare like ackee and okra, but also locally less familiar crops like arugula. For their on-site farm-to-table dinners, Lisa, raised in Brooklyn, uses local tomatoes to make sauce, smears it on grilled bread, and adds caramelized onions, corn, pineapple, and cheese for a novel Jamaican pizza.

After lunch, Blackwell disappears in his house for some hours, re-emerging at intervals throughout the afternoon for a quick chat or to listen to the music constantly playing through a Bluetooth speaker—he is currently into Chronixx, a local Jamaican reggae artist whom Blackwell has signed. Lion, a Rastafarian whom Blackwell lets live on the property, unburdened and unencumbered, stops by to say hello. "Lion knows all the plants," Blackwell says. "If you have an ache or pain, he'll go out and in thirty minutes have something to fix it. And it'll work."

At Pantrepant, dinner is late and light: a bowl of soup and some toast. Often it's Mama J's pepper pot soup, a spicy broth of puréed calaloo with hunks of Jamaican yam, served in frilly English teacups with saucers. I hear the rumblings of stormy weather and ask Blackwell if it's the rainy season. He rejects the assumption of my question: "In the tropics, the seasons aren't like they are up north," he says. Of course, because it's never not sunny in Jamaica. "Here, there's mango season and star apple season," he says. "I love soursop season. They have the best juice. It's very good for your brain." ■



Chris Blackwell (opposite) surveys Pantrepant, the 2,500-acre farm that he says he bought because of its enormous guango tree (right). Above: spicy fricassee chicken (see page 66 for recipe) from country cook Mama J.



Braised Oxtail with Butter Beans

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 60
Active: 1 hr. 15 min.; Total: 9 hr.

Oxtail, a tough cut of meat, becomes meltingly tender when braised in this traditional Jamaican dish, served with coconut rice and red beans (see recipe at right), which soak up all the flavorful pan juices.

- 3 medium white onions, roughly chopped
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 scallions, roughly chopped
- 1 Scotch bonnet chile, stemmed and seeded
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 3 lbs. oxtails
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. pearl onions, peeled
- 2 medium carrots, cut into 1-inch chunks
- One 15-oz. can butter beans

1 In a food processor, combine the onions with the garlic, scallions, and chile and process until smooth. Scrape the aromatics into a large bowl and stir in the soy sauce. Add the oxtails and toss to coat in the marinade. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4 hours.

2 In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high. Remove the oxtails from the bowl and wipe away any marinade clinging to it. Season the oxtails with salt and pepper and, working in batches, add to the pan. Cook, turning once, until browned, about 12 minutes. Transfer the oxtails to a plate.

3 Scrape the marinade into the pan and cook, stirring, until softened and caramelized, about 8 minutes. Return the oxtails to the pan along with 4 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, partially covered and stirring occasionally, until the oxtails are very tender, about 3 hours.

4 Stir in the pearl onions and carrots and cook, stirring, until tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in the butter beans and cook until warmed through, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the oxtails stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Coconut Rice and Red Beans

Serves 6 to 8
Total: 1 hr. 25 min.

If you prefer, you can use canned red kidney beans in this satisfying side dish, served alongside braised oxtails with butter beans (see recipe at left). Simply skip the first step and rinse one 15-oz. can of beans before adding them to the pan in step two.

- 8 oz. dried kidney beans, soaked overnight and drained
- Kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 cups unsweetened coconut milk
- 1 green Scotch bonnet chile, pierced with a paring knife
- 2 cups long grain white rice
- Freshly ground black pepper

1 In a large saucepan, cover the beans with water, season liberally with salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring, until tender, about 40 minutes. Drain the beans in a colander and return the pan to medium heat.

2 Heat the oil in the pan and then stir in the garlic and scallions and cook, stirring, until softened, 3 minutes. Return the beans to the pan, add the coconut milk and chile, and bring to a simmer. Cook the beans, stirring, until the coconut milk is reduced and thickened, about 8 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, rinse the rice in a sieve under cold water until the water runs clear, and then drain.

3 Stir the rice and 2 cups water into the pan and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan, reduce the heat to low, and cook, undisturbed, until the rice is tender, about 20 minutes. Uncover the rice and season with salt and pepper before serving.

Banana Fritters with Cinnamon-Sugar and Rum

Serves 6 to 8
Total: 20 min.

Use very ripe organic bananas for these silver-dollar-size fritters, as they will mash the best and create a smooth, sweet batter.

- 3 ripe bananas (14 oz.), peeled
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp. fresh lime juice, plus more lime wedges, for serving
- 1 large egg
- Kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- Dark rum, for serving

1 In a medium bowl, mash the bananas with the flour, brown sugar, lime juice, and egg until smooth, and season lightly with salt. In another bowl, stir the granulated sugar with the cinnamon.

2 In a 12-inch skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Working in batches, drop tablespoonfuls of batter into the oil and cook the fritters, turning once, until dark golden brown, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fritters to paper towels to drain, and then toss with the cinnamon sugar until evenly coated. Serve hot and drizzled with rum.



Coconut rice and red beans (top); banana fritters with cinnamon-sugar and rum (above).



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Pepper pot soup (above); rosemary-jerk lamb chops (below).

Fricassee Chicken

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 63
Active: 1 hr.; Total: 5 hr.

Though spiced in a familiar, jerk-like marinade, this chicken gets shallow-fried and then cooked down with caramelized aromatics until sticky and spicy-sweet.

- 1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 scallions, roughly chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 3 thyme sprigs, stems removed
- ½ Scotch bonnet chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- One 3–4-lb. whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces
- 1½ cups vegetable oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 In a food processor, combine the onion with the garlic, scallions, and celery and process until smooth. Scrape the aromatics into a large bowl and stir in the soy sauce, thyme leaves, and chile. Add the chicken pieces and toss to coat in the marinade. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4 hours.

2 In a large, high-sided skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Remove the chicken from the bowl and wipe away any marinade clinging to it. Season the chicken with salt and pepper and, working in batches, fry the chicken in the oil, turning once, until just cooked through, about 8 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a plate and drain away all but 3 tablespoons of the oil.

3 Return the pan to the heat and scrape the marinade into the pan. Cook the marinade, stirring, until caramelized,

about 5 minutes. Return the chicken to the pan along with 1 cup water and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook, stirring, until the chicken is very tender and the water is almost evaporated, about 35 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the chicken stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Pepper Pot Soup

Serves 6 to 8
Total: 50 min.

This vegetarian soup, a Jamaican classic, is made with callaloo, a spinach-like green that can be found canned or fresh in Caribbean groceries. Serve with minced fresh Scotch bonnet chiles sprinkled on top for extra heat.

- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 6 scallions, roughly chopped
- 3 thyme sprigs, stems removed
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 small white onion, roughly chopped
- 8 oz. fresh or canned callaloo or spinach, roughly chopped
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 3 Scotch bonnet chiles (1 halved lengthwise; 2 stemmed, seeded, and minced)
- 1 yellow yam or russet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 In a large saucepan, heat the oil over medium. Add the scallions, thyme, garlic, and onion and cook, stirring, until soft, about 7 minutes. Stir in the callaloo, stock, and halved chile. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring, until the callaloo is tender, about 10 minutes.

2 Transfer the soup to a blender, discard the chile, and purée until smooth. Return the soup to the pan over medium heat,

stir in the yam, and cook, stirring, until the yam is tender, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and then serve the soup with the minced chiles on the side.

Rosemary-Jerk Lamb Chops

Serves 6 to 8
Active: 25 min.; Total: 4 hr.

Here, a classic jerk marinade is perfumed with rosemary and slathered over lamb loin chops for a surprising take on the iconic chicken preparation. The soy sauce in the marinade boosts the lamb's umami flavors.

- 7 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 scallions, roughly chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 1 rosemary sprig, stem removed
- ½ Scotch bonnet chile, stemmed and seeded
- 1½ Tbsp. soy sauce
- ½ tsp. ground allspice
- 2 lbs. lamb loin chops, cut 1½ inches thick, tails trimmed
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 In a food processor, combine the garlic with the scallions, onion, rosemary, chile, soy sauce, and allspice and process until smooth. Scrape the aromatics into a large bowl, add the lamb chops, and toss to coat in the marinade. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 4 hours.

2 Light a grill or heat a cast-iron grill pan over high. Remove the lamb from the bowl, along with any marinade clinging to it, and season with salt and pepper; discard marinade. Add the chops to the grill and cook, turning once, until lightly charred on the outside and cooked to medium inside, 12 to 15 minutes. Transfer the lamb to a platter and serve while warm.



SAVEUR MENU

A GUIDE TO EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & PRODUCTS



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BERLIN'S GREEN PARTY



IN GERMANY'S MEAT-LOVING CAPITAL, VEGETABLES HAVE SURPRISINGLY CAPTURED THE CULINARY IMAGINATION. **ALEXANDER LOBRANO** GOES IN SEARCH OF THE CITY'S MOST INSPIRING VEGETARIAN DISHES

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **CHRISTINA HOLMES**



The restaurant Cookies Cream (serving parmesan dumplings with tomato and herb broth, opposite) and casual eatery Daluma (above) are two of Berlin's top vegetarian destinations.

The European city that has become the Old World's most avant-garde culinary laboratory was, until very recently, an unlikely candidate for gastronomic glory. Berlin doesn't have the seemingly indomitable epicurean pedigree of Paris, or Barcelona's spectacular produce. It also lacks the worldly, well-heeled, novelty-loving international clientele that keeps London's restaurants humming, and it has no chef who's internationally exalted at the level of someone like Copenhagen's René Redzepi. But somehow, Berlin is the first major Western city where vegetarianism has achieved complete culinary parity with the traditional carnivore's diet, and the city's new vegetarian cooking is intersecting with the growth of an increasingly popular locavore food scene to create a unique, and often brilliant, meat-free Mittel European-accented cuisine.

A very particular local anxiety feeds Berlin's appetite, because it is a place where the tumultuousness of the past often still preys on the tranquility of the present: Beyond its evident healthiness and ecological probity, vegetarian eating incarnates a trinity of values—idealism, virtuousness, redemption—that creates a deeply hopeful and soothing mental balm for the inhabitants of one of the world's most spectacularly traumatized cities. For many Berliners, the decision to stop consuming meat and to start eating as locally and seasonally as possible is a public affirmation of a personal desire to make the world a better place. And if the transformation of a famously pork-loving city that idolizes eisbein and currywurst—the *ur* Berlin street food of sliced sausage with a sauce of ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, and curry power—seems sudden, it's actually been simmering for 70 years.

Brilliant contemporary dishes, like chef Josita Hartanto's seitan (chewy textured wheat protein) onion roast with pumpkin-seed noodles, red pepper *jus*, and eggplant parmesan at the trendy Prenzlauer Berg district restaurant Lucky Leek, couldn't have existed in pre-war Berlin, because it was the postwar foreign influx—Turks, Greeks, and Italians, recruited to rebuild the ruined city—that changed the city's foodways forever. “We used to think that vegetables were food for sick people,” said the *Oma* (grandmother) of a Berliner friend, adding, “it was the auslanders who brought us the vegetables of the sun—peppers, eggplant, zucchini, and others. At first we found them strange, but when we learned how to cook them, we discovered they're delicious,” she said with a chuckle.

On a warm summer night, my old friend's *Oma*, whom I had anxiously invited to dinner at Lucky Leek (I worried the food might be too odd for her), and I began our meal with a salad that would quickly prove to any skeptic that it's as easy to create sensuality and desire when cooking with plants as it is with meat or fish. Composed of crushed macadamia nuts, several kinds of seaweed, rice cake, and *shiitake nigiri* (shiitake pickled in miso) and dribbled with curry-leaf oil, it was pleasantly provocative, with flavors as intricately layered and juxtaposed as those found in any good beef stew. My main course was a different seitan, this one treated like game in a lush *poivrade* sauce and served with grandmotherly garnishes of carrot purée, creamed mushrooms, and *Serviettenknödel*, the bread dumplings that are a stalwart of Central European cooking.

“Excuse me, is that good?”

Yes, it's delicious, I told the older woman at the table just across from ours.

“It looks and smells like a sauté of venison,” she said. “You don't miss the meat?”

“No, not at all,” I said. Then the lady's amused granddaughter ended our conversation. “I'm sorry, my grandmother's a vegetarian virgin,” the young woman said.

After World War II, Berlin was a broken but wide-open city that gradually evolved into sort of a utopian island,” said Jean-Christian Jury, a 60-year-old French-born chef who

opened his excellent vegan restaurant, La Mano Verde, in 2008 and has become *le père culinaire* to what's probably the world's most talented constellation of vegetarian and vegan chefs.

“Since Berlin was once removed from mainstream postwar life in West Germany, the city attracted unconventional creative people who wanted to live a healthy progressive liberal lifestyle. That often included being vegetarian,” Jury explained. “When the wall came down in 1989, this influx of people not only grew but became more international, and the demand for vegetarian cooking exploded. This is why I moved to Berlin from London—I wanted to create vegetarian cooking that would go beyond nutritious and be so delicious even non-vegetarians would want to eat it. Today, at least a third of the people who visit La Mano Verde aren't regularly vegetarian. They come because they love the food.”

Jury wasn't the only one to envision a serious future for vegetarian cooking in Berlin, which today has more than 30 vegan restaurants alone. Nightlife entrepreneur Heinz Gindullis, aka “Cookie,” an Englishman who's been a vegetarian since he was five years old and who started his eclectic career as a dishwasher in a kosher Berlin restaurant, opened Cookies Cream, a glamorous vegetarian restaurant hidden down a service alley in an industrial-feeling space off the famous Unter den Linden, in 2007. The building, once a part of the French Cultural Center under the GDR, proved difficult to find: “We want to create a mystery that causes you to leave your normal self behind,” explained Markus Jänsch, the managing director of Cookies Cream. A native of Munich who became a vegetarian after moving to Berlin several years ago, Jänsch described the restaurant's success: “Berlin has attracted a creative class who think a lot about what they eat,” he said. “These people care about animals and care about the environment.”

What impressed me most about my meal at Cookies was that chef Stephan Hentschel's cooking almost never reminded you that you were eating vegetarian food. Instead, a sophisticated and overtly sensual dish like soft-boiled quail's egg in brioche with port-wine-and-shallot sauce, potato foam, and truffle *jus* could

Spaghettini with Carrots, Olives, and Red Endive

Serves 4; 📖 Page 71
Total: 20 min.

Carrot ribbons cooked al dente and lightly braised red endive add color to this simple vegetable-packed pasta dish, brightened with lots of lemon zest. Josita Hartanto of Berlin's Lucky Leek uses multicolored carrots for a beautiful presentation.

- 2 Tbsp. pine nuts
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 12 oz. red endive or radicchio, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1½ Tbsp. sugar
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. spaghetti
- 2 medium carrots
- ¼ cup pitted and halved kalamata olives
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 cup packed arugula

1 In a 12-inch skillet, cook the pine nuts over medium-high heat, tossing, until toasted, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pine nuts to a bowl and add the olive oil to the skillet. Add the endive and sugar and season with salt and pepper. Cook the endive, stirring, until wilted and tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the endive to a bowl and wipe the skillet clean.

2 In a large saucepan of boiling salted water, cook the pasta, stirring, until al dente, about 3 minutes. Drain the pasta, reserving 1 cup of the pasta water. Meanwhile, using a vegetable peeler, peel the carrots into long thin slices.

3 Return the skillet to high heat, add the reserved pasta water, and bring to a boil. Add the carrots and cook until crisp-tender, about 1 minute. Stir in the reserved endive along with the olives and lemon zest, and then add the pasta and toss to coat in the sauce. Remove the skillet from the heat, season with salt and pepper, and stir in the arugula. Transfer the pasta to a serving platter and sprinkle with the pine nuts.

Fried Beets with Raspberry Sauce and Hazelnuts

Serves 4

Active: 30 min.; Total: 3 hr.

Large beets, braised with balsamic vinegar, agave syrup, and aromatics and fried in a crisp tempura-like batter, are the main focus of this vegan dish that chef Josita Hartanto serves with a bright fresh raspberry sauce to balance the beets' earthiness.

- 1 3/4** lbs. red beets, peeled and quartered
- 1/4** cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil, plus more
- 1/4** cup agave syrup
- 2** Tbsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 2** Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 4** thyme sprigs
- 1** garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 1** cup frozen, thawed raspberries
- 2** Tbsp. raspberry or red wine vinegar
- 2** Tbsp. apple juice
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 1** cup sparkling water
- 1** cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4** cup dried oregano
- 2** Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1** Tbsp. baking powder
- Mâche, for serving
- 2** Tbsp. finely chopped toasted hazelnuts

1 Heat the oven to 300°. In an 8-inch square baking dish, toss the beets with 1/4 cup olive oil, 2 tablespoons agave syrup, 1 tablespoon salt, the balsamic vinegar, thyme, and garlic. Cover the dish with foil and bake until the beets are tender, about 1 1/2 hours.

2 Meanwhile, in a blender, combine the raspberries with 2 tablespoons olive oil, the remaining 2 tablespoons agave syrup, the raspberry vinegar, and apple juice. Season with salt and pepper and purée until smooth. Scrape the sauce into a bowl and refrigerate for 1 hour.

(continued on page 72)

Clockwise from top left: avocado and apple "tartare" with fried dumplings (see page 74 for recipe); fried beets with raspberry sauce; green minestrone with kohlrabi and olives and cashew butter toast (see page 75 for recipe); spaghetti with carrots and red endive (see page 70 for recipe).

Photograph by Matt Taylor-Gross

easily have kicked off dinner in a steakhouse, while a crunchy potato lasagna with asparagus, gnocchi-like Swiss cheese “truffles,” radishes, and mushrooms had a deliciously trashy charm that was pointedly at odds with the puritanical sanctimoniousness of the drab ’60s vintage “health-food” cooking once associated with vegetarianism.

“In the past Berlin was a working-class city without a bourgeoisie that cared about good food,” said Ilhami Terzi, the delightful and incisive Turkish-German owner of Kopps, one of my favorite vegan restaurants in Berlin since I began exploring the city’s green scene several years ago. “This started to change when more and more people went vegan. They were attracted by health benefits and environmentalism, but they didn’t want to lose the pleasure of good food,” said Terzi. He serves this newly vegan clientele frankly delicious dishes like kohlrabi-saffron soup garnished with celery and Passe-Pierre seaweed, and sweet-potato-and-leek paté with orange, fennel, and pumpkin seeds.

For my part, the vegetarian cooking in Berlin is so compellingly original I always choose the vegetal menu over the conventional one when given the choice, like at the new, puckishly named Nobelhart & Schmutzig (the name, taken from a sports page headline, means “noble, hard, and dirty”). The brilliant modern Prussian bistro, occupying a shop front remodeled with an open kitchen surrounded by a counter, is located near the site of the famous gate known as Checkpoint Charlie in the now-vanished Berlin Wall.

“By being brutally local, we’re inventing a new way of eating and cooking in Berlin today,” said Billy Wagner, one of the best young sommeliers in Germany and the restaurant’s owner. “When our city was sundered, we forgot about what grew on our doorstep, and all anyone cared about was Italian-style cooking, because that was the country our fruit and vegetables came from and where we went on holiday,” the generously bearded Wagner explained to me the night I settled on a stool at this low-lit and almost impossibly popular restaurant, a place the prestigious German newspaper *Die Welt* has dubbed the country’s “most radical restaurant.”

“For 15 years, local agriculture has been coming back,” Wagner says. “And now with the booming demand for organic local seasonal produce from vegetarians, regional agriculture is in the midst of a little renaissance.”

Wagner and chef Micha Schäfer have created their own fragile food chain with the help of very small-scale local suppliers, who get a shout out on their menu. “We’re trying to be as indigenous as possible,” said Wagner. “Micha and I work together to find substitutes for imported foods. Verjus can bring the same acidity to food as citrus in many dishes. Our salt comes from Göttingen and raw milk butter from Szczecin over the border in Poland.”

What makes a vegetarian meal here satisfying is that it’s composed of dishes that couldn’t exist anywhere else but in Germany’s Brandenburg province, which surrounds Berlin. King oyster mushrooms with pickled elderberries and elderberry coulis, radish salad with pickled beech tree sprouts and emerald green parsley purée, and sorrel ice cream with dill-blossom meringue were the purest and most primal expression of early summer in central Europe I’ve had since the mad lust of a first kiss with a Czech lover 20 years ago. These wildly horny dishes blindsided the dying convention of vegetarian food as neutered, bland, and sad.

Every city I visit regularly gifts me with a craving for a specific dish. In Rome, it’s the spaghettone carbonara at Roscioli, while Valencia means paella, Vienna tafelspitz and schnitzel, and Singapore laksa, oh please more laksa. For years, a boarding pass marked TXL for Tegel Airport in Berlin brought on an urgent desire to head for the sausage heaven that is the lavish wiener-and-wurst stall of the food hall at KaDeWe, the German capital’s best department store. But now I crave Jury’s spaghetti de la mer, gluten-free rice-flour spaghetti cooked with wakame and Passe-Pierre seaweed, sundried tomatoes, and sesame, chile, and coriander-garlic oils. Berlin has changed a lot, and its bold new culture of vegetarian delectation has changed me, too. ■

(continued from page 71)

3 Pour enough vegetable oil to come 2 inches up the side of a medium saucepan. Attach a deep-fry thermometer to the side of the pan and heat the oil to 350°. In a medium bowl, whisk the sparkling water with ½ cup flour, the oregano, cornstarch, baking powder, and remaining 1 tablespoon salt into a smooth batter. Place the remaining ½ cup flour in another bowl.

4 Uncover the beets and transfer them to paper towels to dry and briefly cool. Place the beets in the bowl with the flour and toss to coat evenly. Working in batches, dip the floured beets into the batter and then drop into the hot oil. Fry the beets until golden brown and crisp, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, lift the beets from the oil, drain briefly on paper towels, and season with salt.

5 To serve, lightly dress the mâche with a drizzle of olive oil in a small bowl and season with salt and pepper. Spoon some of the raspberry sauce onto 4 plates, and then top with the warm beets. Divide the mâche over the beets and sprinkle with the hazelnuts.

Seaweed Salad with Orange and Macadamia Nuts

Serves 4;  Page 73

Active: 35 min.; Total: 2 hr. 15 min.

Chef Josita Hartanto mixes three marinated seaweeds with sweet caramelized mushrooms, steamed vinegary rice, and crisp toasted nori in this vegan rice bowl. All of the seaweeds used here can be found online so search them out, as they each contribute a different texture and taste to this salad.

- ⅓ cup wakame seaweed (1 oz.; [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))
- ⅓ cup roughly chopped agar agar strips (½ oz.; [shop.com](https://www.shop.com))
- ¼ cup hijiki seaweed (½ oz.; [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com))
- ¼ cup plus 2 tsp. rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. white miso



Chef Josita Hartanto of Berlin's Lucky Leek (bottom left) creates impressive vegetarian mains like seaweed salad with oranges (bottom right, see page 72 for recipe). Kopps, a restaurant on Linienstrasse (middle right), goes full vegan, and at Nobelhart & Schmutzig (middle left), vegetarian dishes shine. The night market at Markethalle Neun (top left) offers delicious street food on Thursdays.





Spinach and potato dumplings with cold tomato sauce.

- 2 tsp. finely grated palm sugar or packed light brown sugar
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 Tbsp. roughly chopped macadamia nuts

- Eight 4-inch square nori sheets
- 12 oz. shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, tops quartered
- 2 Tbsp. kecap manis (sweet soy sauce; amazon.com)
- 1 cup glutinous or short-grain rice
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 2 oranges

1 In a large bowl, combine the wakame, agar agar, and hijiki and cover with 4 cups cold water. Let stand for 15 minutes to hydrate and then drain. Spread the seaweeds out on paper towels, press to dry thoroughly, and then return to the bowl. Add 2 teaspoons rice vinegar, along with the miso, palm sugar, soy sauce, ginger, and sesame oil and toss to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let seaweeds marinate in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour.

2 Meanwhile, heat a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add the macadamia nuts and cook, stirring, until toasted, about 2 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a bowl and return the skillet to the heat. Working in batches, add the nori sheets to the skillet and cook, flipping once, until toasted and fragrant, 10 to 15 seconds. Transfer the nori sheets to paper towels and return the skillet to the heat.

3 Add the mushrooms to the skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until their

moisture evaporates and they begin to caramelize, about 8 minutes. Stir in the kecap manis and then remove from the heat and let the mushrooms cool.

4 In a small saucepan, combine the rice with 1 1/2 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook the rice, covered, until tender, 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Uncover the rice and scrape into a medium bowl. Add the remaining 1/4 cup rice vinegar, the salt, and sugar and toss to combine.

5 To serve, divide the rice among 4 serving bowls and then arrange the marinated seaweeds and mushrooms in separate piles next to the rice. Using a paring knife, peel the pith away from the oranges and then cut in between the membranes to release the orange segments. Garnish the rice bowls with the orange segments and then tuck the toasted nori sheets into the bowls. Sprinkle with the macadamia nuts and serve immediately.

Avocado and Apple “Tartare” with Fried Walnut Dumplings and Chive Cream

Serves 4; 📖 Page 71
Total: 40 min.

Tart apple and cold avocado balance hot, crisp walnut dumplings and creamy chive sauce in this refreshing vegan dish from chef Josita Hartanto. You can make the walnut dumplings a day ahead, but make sure to prepare the tartare within two hours of serving, so the apples and avocados don't brown.

- 2 ripe avocados, halved, pitted, peeled, and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 2 Tbsp. thinly sliced lemon balm or tarragon
- 1 Tbsp. walnut oil
- Finely grated zest and juice from 1/2 lime
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup soy or coconut yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped chives
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup whole walnuts
- 2 Tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley
- 4 sundried tomatoes in oil, drained
- 1 vine-ripe tomato, core and seeds removed

12 wonton wrappers Vegetable oil, for frying

1 In a large bowl, combine the avocados with the apples, shallots, lemon balm, walnut oil, and lime zest and juice, and season with salt and pepper. Cover the tartare with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use, up to 2 hours.

2 In a small bowl, stir the yogurt with the chives, olive oil, and lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper. Cover the chive cream with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to use, up to 2 hours.

3 In a blender, combine the walnuts with the parsley and both tomatoes, and season with salt and pepper. Purée until smooth and then scrape into a small bowl. Place 2 teaspoons of the walnut filling in the center of each wonton wrapper and brush the edges of the wonton with water. Fold the wonton around the filling like a candy wrapper and twist the edges to seal the dumplings.

4 Pour enough vegetable oil to come 2 inches up the side of a medium saucepan. Attach a deep-fry thermometer to the side of the pan and heat the oil to 350°. Add the dumplings and cook until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, lift the dumplings from the oil, drain briefly on paper towels, and season with salt.

5 To serve, divide the tartare among four plates and then spoon a dollop of the chive cream on the side. Divide the dumplings among the plates and serve while hot.

Spinach and Potato Dumplings with Cold Tomato Sauce

Serves 4
Active: 40 min.; Total: 1 hr. 20 min.

A chilled tomato sauce with sundried tomatoes makes a pleasant contrast to these hot potato and spinach dumplings, which chef Josita Hartanto binds together with firm tofu and durum wheat semolina. Dry the potatoes and spinach thoroughly so the dumplings will hold their shape.

- Kosher salt
- 2 russet potatoes (1 1/2 lbs.)
- 6 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- 7 oz. fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- 8 sundried tomatoes in oil, drained

- 1 large beefsteak tomato, cored and quartered
- 2 thyme sprigs, stems removed
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 1/2 oz. firm tofu, drained
- 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. durum wheat semolina flour (amazon.com)
- 2 Tbsp. plain bread crumbs
- Freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 small zucchini, julienned
- 2 Tbsp. roughly chopped, toasted hazelnuts

1 In a large saucepan of boiling, salted water, add the potatoes and cook until tender, about 30 minutes. Drain the potatoes and then let stand until cool enough to handle. Peel the potatoes and, using a potato ricer or masher, rice the potatoes on a baking sheet, and then let stand to air-dry and cool completely.

2 In a 12-inch nonstick skillet, heat 3 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high. Add the shallot and cook, stirring, until lightly caramelized, about 3 minutes. Add the spinach and cook, stirring, until it wilts down, all its moisture evaporates, and the spinach begins sticking to the pan, about 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let the spinach cool completely.

3 Meanwhile, make the tomato sauce: Combine both tomatoes, the thyme leaves, and sugar in a blender and purée until smooth. Scrape the sauce into a bowl, season with salt and pepper, and refrigerate until ready to use, at least 1 hour.

4 Place the tofu in a fine sieve set over a large bowl and, using a rubber spatula, press it through the sieve. Add the cooled potatoes and spinach to the tofu along with the flour, semolina, and bread crumbs and stir until evenly combined. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg and stir to combine. Using your hands, divide the spinach dough into eighths and form each eighth into a round dumpling.

5 Heat the broiler. In a 12-inch skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium-high. Arrange the dumplings in the skillet and then sprinkle the zucchini in and around the dumplings. Drizzle the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil evenly over the dumplings and then broil until the dumplings are browned on top and warmed through, about 10 minutes. Remove the dumplings from the broiler and sprinkle with the hazelnuts. Serve the dumplings hot from the skillet with the cold tomato sauce on the side.

Green Minestrone with Kohlrabi, Olives, and Spinach Pesto

Serves 4 to 6; Page 71
Total: 45 min.

Chef Josita Hartanto's minestrone is made with hearty kohlrabi and briny green olives, and is brightened by a fresh pesto stirred in just before serving. To make the cashew cream for serving, simply soak 1 cup plain cashews with 3/4 cup boiling water in a blender until the water cools to room temperature, and then purée until silky smooth.

Kosher salt

- 1 cup ditalini
- 5 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced shallots
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- 2 cups finely diced zucchini
- 1 cup finely diced kohlrabi
- 1 cup finely chopped leek
- 3/4 cup finely diced fennel
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 1/4 cup thawed frozen peas
- 6 large green olives, pitted and roughly chopped
- 5 oz. baby spinach
- 2 cups packed basil leaves
- 5 Tbsp. pine nuts
- Toasted country bread and cashew cream, for serving

1 In a medium saucepan of boiling, salted water, cook the pasta, stirring, until al dente, about 4 minutes. Drain the pasta and keep warm. Return the empty pan to medium heat, and add 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add the shallots and garlic and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Stir in the zucchini, kohlrabi, leek, and fennel. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until slightly softened, about 6 minutes.

2 Pour in the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the reserved pasta along with the peas and olives and cook until warmed through, about 2 minutes more.

3 In a blender, combine the spinach with the basil, pine nuts, and the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil. Purée into a smooth pesto and then scrape the pesto into the soup and stir until evenly combined. Ladle the minestrone into bowls and serve with toasted bread and cashew cream on the side.

green Where to eat in BERLIN

Cookies Cream

Tucked away just off Unter den Linden near the Brandenburger Tor, one of Berlin's best vegetarian restaurants pulls a fashion crowd. *Behrenstrasse 55; cookiescream.com*

Daluma

Vegetarian entrepreneurs in Berlin are pioneering healthy fast casual eating, and the recently opened Daluma in Mitte aces the concept with cold-pressed juices and raw-food salads. *Weinbergsweg 3; daluma.de*

Lokal

Perfect for dinner (be sure to make a reservation) after a day on museum island, this hipster bistro proudly works with as much local seasonal produce as possible. *Linienstrasse 160; lokal-berlin.blogspot.de*

Kopps

Not only is the vegan cooking outstanding at this Mitte restaurant, but owner Ilhami Terzi pours a great list of organic wines by the glass. Excellent weekend brunch buffet, too. *Linienstrasse 94; kopps-berlin.de*

Lucky Leek

The menu changes often at this deservedly popular vegan restaurant in the hip Prenzlauer Berg district, but dishes like sour-and-spicy soup with glass noodles and herb-stuffed wontons, and split-pea bonbons with apricot peperonata sauce, show off the kitchen's cosmopolitan style. *Kollwitzstrasse 54; lucky-leek.de*

La Mano Verde

Vegan chef Jean-Christian Jury, a native of Toulouse, was the one who first showed Berliners the gourmet side of green eating with dishes like creamy lime-almond gazpacho with avocado; eggplant terrine with "cheese" made from nuts and basil; and green-apple Charlotte cake. *Uhlandstrasse 181-183; lamanoverdeberlin.com*

Nobelhart & Schmutzig

Run by sommelier Billy Wagner and chef Micha Schäfer, Berlin's hottest bistro is hyper-local, which means modern Prussian cooking sourced in and around Berlin. A vegetarian prix-fixe tasting menu is offered alongside the conventional one, and both are brilliant. *Friedrichstrasse 218; nobelhartundschmutzig.com*

ALL

THE NEXT GREAT
FOOD CITY

In the lab above the dining room of his renowned restaurant, Boragó, Rodolfo Guzmán wants to show me his latest science experiment: carrot sticks injected with penicillin. They've grown furry and turned white.

"Their insides will become creamy and take on a cheesy flavor," he assures me. "Like Camembert."

The lab, in the upscale Vitacura district of Santiago, Chile, is outfitted with a galley kitchen, microscopes, piles of books—some on Patagonian cooking, others on alpine flowers of the Andes. "*Menos es Más*" is scrawled on a blackboard charting the decomposition of vegetables. *Less is more.*

This wiry, blue-eyed chef, who labored in obscurity until recently, may best personify Santiago's new culinary scene. A botany enthusiast, he conducts epic foraging expeditions with his staff to source rare ingredients. The lab is continuously codifying new recipes, like the carrots, for a hyper-seasonal menu that draws from 700 dishes already in the inventory. And

he's obsessed, positively obsessed, with mushrooms, including one variety that grows only in the trees of his hometown's urban parks. In a city that barely registers on most Latin America bucket lists, Rodolfo Guzmán is the reason to show up for dinner.

Founded in 1541 by conquistador Pedro de Valdivia, Chile's capital is formally called Santiago del Nuevo Extremo, a marvelous demarcation for the latitude and attitude at this southerly extreme. Located in the fertile Central Valley, midpoint for a 2,650-mile-long republic, Santiago is a city whose luck has finally turned: With the dark deeds of Augusto Pinochet firmly in the past, it is now poised to join Lima, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo in South America's culinary vanguard. Instead of rushing through to elsewhere, as I've done before, it's finally time to give this emerging food scene a closer look.

Boragó is unquestionably Santiago's restaurant of the moment and Guzmán's enthusiasm part of a recent local movement to create greater awareness

EYES ON

SANTIAGO

Revitalized at long last, the Chilean capital—full of fresh seafood, incomparable produce, adventurous chefs, and national pride—is the world's next culinary hot spot

BY SHANE MITCHELL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARACELI PAZ

At Liguria, a popular Santiago bar-restaurant known for its pisco sours, patrons and staff watch anxiously as Peru almost edges out Chile in the semifinals of the Copa América. The next week, Chile went on to win its first-ever title, defeating Argentina with a penalty kick.

for the bounty of a diverse republic. Travel the country's 38 latitudes and you'll find icy tundra, bone-dry desert, and subtropical islands, with wide-ranging ingredients to match.

"We're cataloging the whole country," Guzmán tells me, as we set off from the lab on a collection run for sea parsley and *ulte* (a hardy type of kelp) at a beach an hour northwest of Santiago. Guzmán and his collaborators are currently working on a multi-volume archive of edibles specific to Chile.

And it can't happen soon enough. I cribbed a dozen Spanish-to-Latin-to-English databases in an attempt to identify the plants and proteins—*boldo*, *moye*, *rica rica*, *kolof*, *piure*, *guanaco*—that he uses in the kitchen. As far as he's concerned, to truly understand a land, you must understand its ingredients.

"Without culture," he tells me, "you cannot have your soul. And food is culture."

On the way, we pass through the vineyards of Casablanca and pull over at a modest roadside joint to devour *empanadas de pino* baked in a wood-fired clay oven. The filling, rich with shredded beef, onions, and olives, is a favorite of both gauchos and taxi drivers, not to mention Guzmán's crew, a carload of hungry interns who are about to hike over rough seaside trails for hours.

The next day I find myself at a *fuerza de soda*. Soda fountains have a long history in Santiago, but the menu at year-old Las Cabras aims higher than fast food standards like *completo*, Chile's variation on fully loaded hot dogs. I'm here to meet Carola Silva, a founder of Ñam, Chile's most vibrant food festival, which features the country's rising culinary stars and attracts thousands of people each April. The counter stools and booths are packed on this sunny afternoon, and as we squeeze in to our seats, I mention my day foraging with Guzmán.

"For years, we looked beyond our borders, not inward, for inspiration," she says, before labeling Guzmán a *mosca blanca*, or a white fly. They're rare, just like Guzmán, she explains, chuckling.

Chef-owner Juan Pablo Mellado Arana, a husky man with a big grin, joins us and adds his opinion about the changing culinary climate.

"We were *siútico*," he says. Snobby. "This snobby love of foreign things made us lose our identity. Only recently have we started to dance the *cueca*, listen to our music, eat our foods again."

Arana has taken the liberty of putting in an order of his favorite dishes for us, and the first to arrive is a subtly spiced pork shank braised in its own juices.

"My god, stop me," he says, not stopping, breaking the succulent meat down with a spoon. I happily crunch an accompanying celery and avocado salad, which cuts through the pork's fat nicely, and then use a bronzed fry to swipe up the pan gravy from a dish of beef cheeks drizzled with garlic cream. Garbanzos dabbled with spinach and seared plump scallops win me over at first bite. So simple, so comforting. A shot of local Araucano bitters accompanies the finale, a tender flan. It's one hell of an elevated meal for a soda fountain. Hours have passed by the time I extract myself from the banquette.

A few days later I pass through the handsome doors of Confeitería Torres, Santiago's oldest café, where afternoon tea is an institution. Traditional tea time, which Chileans call *onces*, starts in the late afternoon, but here you can order sandwiches, savory bites, and local



Inventive chef Rodolfo Guzmán (left) serves dishes like a soft-boiled quail's egg (below), presented to the diner in a nest of mushrooms; his creativity has earned him and his restaurant, Boragó, international accolades and enticed throngs of eager diners to his hometown of Santiago (bottom).



pastries all day long. Diners cut into slices of tres leches cake topped with fluffy meringue as an elderly staff smooths white tablecloths and sweeps green and white tile floors.

I'm in the mood for something substantial, so I request a Barros Luco, a generous sandwich of pan-fried sirloin topped with molten mantecoso cheese. It's named for Ramón Barros Luco, the president of the country from 1910 to 1915, whose photograph hangs above me. Along with the chubby, mustachioed Luco, every Chilean leader except one certain dictator is represented in the political gallery on the café's butter yellow walls.

When my sandwich arrives, I ask the waiter, who introduces himself as José Santos, how long he's been at the restaurant.

"Fifty-six years," he replies, proudly.

"So you worked here during the *dictadura*. What was that like?"

"Awful. Just awful." Santos becomes solemn. "We were only permitted to serve until lunchtime. No afternoon tea."

I return to Boragó a week after my botany-driven foraging expedition. The restaurant lacks formality and fancy linens, but serious stuff is taking place in an open kitchen behind soundproofed glass, where cooks hunch over prep tables, deep in concentration. Each bite of the 18-course Endémica—or native—menu highlights Guzmán's resourceful network, which stretches from indigenous communities in Selva Valdiviana that send him spice blends and herbs to ranches in Patagonia, where he sources venison and lamb.

Guanaco (similar to a llama) is cooked with the season's last *murtillo* berries, which resemble cranberries and taste faintly like strawberries. A "breadstick" arrives, made from *ulte*—that kelp we gathered at the beach. Then a dish of *piure*, an invertebrate that hides inside a hard-as-rock shell, its lipstick red skin resting on a stark bed of black pebbles from the same shoreline. Puréed succulents float in an earthy *kolofroot* broth. Even the *pebre*, a typically bland Chilean salsa that sits like ketchup on dining tables everywhere in the capital, ready to be spooned on meats or eaten with bread, is curiously creamy, with a depth of flavor that hints of char and toast.

As the meal progresses, Guzmán often presents dishes himself. The most arresting is a soft-boiled quail egg, resting on a nest that is, in turn, perched on the branches of a foot-high bonsai tree. I pluck the peeled egg and, cupping it in my palm, pop it in my mouth. The nest is, in fact, a tangle of crispy mushrooms, and the egg tastes honeyed. A wild little morsel presented as poetry.

Just after daybreak every Tuesday, trucks arrive from the countryside bearing fresh produce to the wholesale warehouses and retail stalls at La Vega Central, the city's main vegetable market, which has sat at the south end of Recoleta commune near the Mapocho River since 1895. Zapallo pumpkins, pears, and cherry tomatoes are unloaded, the last bounty before snowfall. Less esoteric than the pantry at Boragó, perhaps, but still a healthy sign of a city's revival after a tumultuous era of soup kitchens and bread lines. I dodge vendors wrestling barrels of pickled cauliflower and green chile relishes. Others peel globe artichokes and straighten piles of winter squash.

A few blocks away is the Mercado Central, an elegant wrought-iron structure built in 1872. The Humboldt Current flows north from Antarctica along Chile's coast, enriching the waters and contributing to a teeming marine ecosystem that feeds Santiago's endless craving for sweet shrimp and king crab. Many of the fishmongers wear red, white, and blue soccer caps—after nearly a century without a win, the national team has a sporting chance of winning the Copa América, the southern continent's largest soccer tournament.

"Go, Chile!" I say. They grin, thumbs up.

The Chilean poet Pablo Neruda ate at this market regularly. Conger eel chowder was his favorite, so much so that he penned a stirring ode to *caldillo de congrio*.

"In the storm-tossed Chilean sea lives the rosy conger," wrote the Nobel Laureate, describing the "thick and succulent" chowder as a "boon to man."

It's part recipe, part tribute to the essence of Chile by an exiled author recently returned to his homeland. Neruda's poems include love notes to onions and chestnuts, too. Collectively, they address the same sentiments about soul and culture that seem not only to motivate a certain botany-obsessed chef, but also to capture the rising tide of national spirit.

How lovely, I think, passing a silver pile of Pacific fish, to bear witness to a place as it becomes, like Neruda's tender eel, "immersed in glory" once again. ■



Scallops with Stewed Chickpeas and Tomatoes

Serves 4 to 6

Total: 50 min.

Tender, sweet scallops are paired with a tomato-rich chickpea stew, here spiced with *merkén*, a traditional Chilean red chile spice mix made from dried *ají cacho de cabra*, or goat's horn chiles. This simple stew, from chef Juan Pablo Mellado Arana of Las Cabras, a soda fountain and restaurant in Providencia, is ideal served with a hunk of crusty bread for dunking.

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. merkén (amazon.com) or hot paprika
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup white wine
- One 15-oz. can chickpeas, drained
- One 15-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes, crushed by hand
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 12 bay scallops
- ½ cup loosely packed arugula

1 In a medium saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until lightly caramelized, about 12 minutes. Add the paprika, tomato paste, and garlic and cook, stirring, until lightly caramelized, about 2 minutes. Add the wine and cook, stirring, until almost all evaporated, 12 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas, tomatoes, and ½ cup water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes. Transfer the chickpeas to a bowl and season with salt and pepper.

2 In a large skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil over high until the skillet

begins to smoke. Season the scallops with salt and pepper and then add to the skillet and cook, turning once, until just cooked through, 3 minutes. Transfer the scallops to a plate and serve alongside the chickpeas. Garnish with the arugula and serve with bread, if you like.

Beef Short Rib Empanadas

Makes 2 dozen; 📖 Page 82
Active: 1 hr. 15 min.; Total: 4 hr.

In his version of Chilean empanadas, chef Rodolfo Guzmán of Boragó replaces lean ground chuck with rich beef short ribs, which make each bite tender. For a step-by-step tutorial on crimping empanadas, go to saveur.com/crimping-empanadas.

- 7 Tbsp. pork lard or vegetable shortening (3½ oz.)
- 1½ Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 cups all-purpose flour
- 12 oz. boneless beef short rib meat, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 medium white onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. merkén (amazon.com) or hot paprika
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- ½ cup minced green olives
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, cut crosswise into 6 slices each
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten

1 For the dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, combine the 3 tablespoons lard with 1½ tablespoons salt and 2 cups boiling water, stirring until the lard melts. Add the flour and mix on medium-low speed until the dough comes together. Increase the speed to medium and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes. Scrape the dough onto a work surface and cut into quarters. Shape each quarter into a ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate the dough balls for at least 1 hour.

2 For the filling: In a large saucepan, melt the remaining 4 tablespoons lard over high heat. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until browned, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the beef to a plate. Add the onions and garlic to the pan and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in the remaining 2 teaspoons salt, the oregano, cumin, paprika, and pepper and cook for 1 minute. Return the beef to the pan with 3 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a slow, steady simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the beef is tender and the sauce is reduced, about 1 hour. Remove the pan from the heat and let the filling cool.

3 Heat the oven to 425°. Place 1 dough ball on a floured work surface and, using a rolling pin, flatten until ¼-inch thick. Using a 5-inch round cutter, cut out 6 circles of dough and transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Working with one circle at a time, place 1½ tablespoons filling in the middle, and top with 1 teaspoon olives and 1 egg slice. Moisten the edge of the circle with water and fold in half to form a turnover, crimping the dough to seal. Return the empanada to the baking sheet and repeat with the remaining dough, filling, olives, and eggs.

4 Using a pastry brush, lightly brush each empanada with the egg white and then bake, one sheet at a time and rotating the baking sheet halfway through, until golden brown and hot, about 25 minutes.

Chilean Tomato and Pepper Sauce (Pebre)

Serves 4 to 6; 📖 Page 83
Total: 20 min.

Distantly related to Mexican salsa, *pebre* is an emulsified blend of tomatoes, peppers, and vinegar traditionally served with bread rolls in Santiago. This recipe, from chef Rodolfo Guzmán, uses native green *aji cristal* chiles, but you can substitute banana peppers to mimic their very mild, floral heat.

- 1 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- ½ cup packed cilantro leaves
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 2 vine-ripe tomatoes, cored and roughly chopped
- 1 green *aji cristal* chile or ½ banana pepper, stemmed and seeded
- ½ cup olive oil
- 6 Tbsp. distilled white vinegar

In a small skillet, stir the flour over medium heat until lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and let cool. In a blender, combine the cilantro with the salt, tomatoes, and chile. Then, with the machine on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until the vegetables emulsify into a smooth sauce. Scrape the sauce into the bowl with the toasted flour and add the vinegar. Stir to combine the ingredients and then let stand for 5 minutes to allow the flour to thicken the salsa before serving.

Spice-Rubbed Pork Shanks

Serves 2 to 4; 📖 Page 84
Active: 15 min.; Total: 4 hr.

Chef Juan Pablo Mellado Arana serves these pork shanks, burnished red from *merkén* and piquant red pepper paste, with rice for a substantial lunch. To check the doneness of the pork without opening the packet,

simply pierce the packet with a paring knife; it should go in with no resistance.

- Two 1½-lb. pork shanks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 Tbsp. paprika paste (kalustyans.com)
- 1 Tbsp. merkén (amazon.com) or hot paprika
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. ground cumin

1 Heat the oven to 325°. Layer one 24-inch square sheet of foil with a 24-inch sheet of parchment paper and place the shanks on the paper; season with salt and pepper. On a cutting board, use the side of your knife to mash the garlic with a pinch of salt into a smooth paste. Scrape the garlic into a bowl and stir in the paprika paste, merkén, oregano, and cumin. Rub the spice mix all over the pork shanks.

2 Bring the sides of the parchment and foil up over the pork and crimp to form a packet. Transfer the packet to a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and bake until the meat is very tender, about 4 hours. To serve, cut open the packet and serve the pork warm with its pan juices.

Marinated Celery and Avocado Salad

Serves 4 to 6; 📖 Page 84
Total: 40 min.

Crisp celery and radishes are lightly pickled in lemon juice in this salad from chef Juan Pablo Mellado Arana, which makes a perfect addition to any heavy Chilean meal.

- 6 celery stalks, cut into ¼-inch-thick slices, leaves reserved
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 avocados, halved, pitted, and peeled
- ½ cup kalamata olives, pitted

1 In a medium bowl of ice water, soak the sliced celery and radishes for 10 minutes. Drain and return the vegetables to the bowl and season with salt and pepper. Pour the lemon juice over the vegetables and toss to combine. Let the vegetables stand for 10 minutes to marinate in the juice.

2 Add the oil to the vegetables and toss to coat. Cut each avocado half into 4 wedges and then gently toss with the celery and radishes. Transfer the salad to a platter and sprinkle with the olives and celery leaves before serving.

Braised Beef Stew with Garlic Cream

Serves 4 to 6

Active: 45 min.; Total: 4 hr.

The silky garlic cream sauce at Las Cabras restaurant adds a welcome zing to this rich stew, but is also a great condiment in its own right—dunked in fries, slathered on sandwich bread, or spooned over meats.

- 3 lbs. beef chuck, cut into 2-inch cubes**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- ½ cup all-purpose flour**
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil**
- 1 large yellow onion, roughly chopped**
- 1 medium carrot, roughly chopped**
- 2 cups red wine**
- 2 thyme sprigs**
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled**
- 1 cup olive oil**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- ½ cup heavy cream**

1 In a large bowl, season the beef with salt and pepper and toss with the flour. In an 8-qt. saucepan, heat ⅓ cup vegetable oil over medium-high. Working in batches, add the beef to the pan and cook, turning, until browned on all sides, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a plate and return the pan to medium-high heat.

2 Add the onion and carrot and cook, stirring, until lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Stir in the wine and thyme and cook, stirring, until the wine reduces by half, about 10 minutes. Return the beef to the pan and then stir in 8 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a slow, steady simmer and then cook, stirring occasionally, until the beef is very tender and the sauce is reduced, about 3 hours.

3 Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, combine the garlic with 1 cup water and bring to boil. Cook for 5 minutes and then drain the garlic. Return the garlic to the pan along with the olive oil and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Cook for 5 minutes and then remove from the heat and drain the garlic, reserving the olive oil. Return the garlic to the pan, add the milk and cream, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring, until the cream is reduced and the garlic is tender, 10 to 12 minutes.

4 Pour the garlic cream into a blender and purée until smooth. With the machine on, slowly drizzle in the reserved olive oil and blend into a thick sauce. Scrape the sauce into a serving bowl and serve alongside the beef stew.

In Chile, beef stew is often served with a plate of crispy fried potatoes, known as *papas fritas*. For our ultimate recipe, go to saveur.com/chile-fries-recipe.





Spice-rubbed pork shanks with marinated celery and avocado salad (see page 81 for recipes); La Vega Central Market (below).



Travel Guide: **SANTIAGO**

WHERE TO STAY

The Singular

Located on a quiet street in Lastarria, Santiago's Bohemian neighborhood, this elegant newcomer has a rooftop terrace bar with a view of the Andes. *Merced 294; thesingular.com*

Hotel Altiplanico

Downtown, opposite the National Fine Arts Museum and close to the markets, this converted townhouse has 24 contemporary guestrooms, some with balconies overlooking the city's Parque Forestal. *Santo Domingo 526; altiplanico.cl*

WHERE TO EAT

Bocánariz

Vinobar & Shop

Pair plates of *salumi* and ceviche with tasting flights or buy wine to-go at this attractive bar that features up-and-coming regional winemakers. *Jose Victorino Lastarria 276; bocanariz.cl*

Boragó

Rodolfo Guzmán's cutting-edge restaurant is ranked 42 on the current S. Pellegrino World's 50 Best list and features innovative dishes that are equal parts theater and science. *Nueva Costanera 3467; borago.cl*

Confitería Torres

Enjoy afternoon tea at this 136-year-old café, where you can also order sweet and savory snacks all day long. *Ar. Alameda 1570; confiteriatorres.cl*

Emporio La Rosa

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Las Cabras

Try the pork shank (*pernil aliñado*) and the Italiano, an oversized hamburger topped with avocado, at this inventive soda fountain. *Luis Thayer Ojeda 0166; +56 2 2232 9671*

Liguria

The pisco sour at this popular bar-restaurant is made with locally produced spirits. Pair it with hake cheek stew or fried conger eel. *Avenida Providencia 1373; liguria.cl*



Baked Custard with Caramel Sauce (*Leche Asada*)

Serves 4 to 6

Active: 30 min.; Total: 7 1/2 hr.

This classic custard is ubiquitous in Chile, where it is served in cups for a quick afternoon snack or baked in a larger pan for a family-style dessert.

- 3 orange slices, cut 1/4-inch-thick
- 1 1/2 cups plus 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 large eggs

1 Heat the oven to 325°. In an 8-inch square baking dish, sprinkle the orange slices with 2 tablespoons sugar. Drizzle with the orange juice and cover with foil. Bake until very soft, about 40 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool. Refrigerate the orange slices in the dish and keep the oven at 325°.

2 In a medium saucepan, heat 1 cup sugar over medium-high and cook, stirring with a heatproof spatula, until the sugar turns dark amber. Remove from the heat and quickly pour the caramel evenly over the bottom of a deep 8-inch pie dish. Let stand for 10 minutes until the caramel hardens.

3 In a small saucepan, combine the milk with the vanilla and salt and then heat over medium. Cook, stirring, until the salt dissolves and the milk just begins to simmer. Remove from the heat and let cool. In a large bowl, whisk the remaining 1/2 cup sugar with the eggs until just combined. While whisking, slowly pour the warm milk into the eggs and stir until the sugar dissolves. Pour the custard over the caramel and then place the dish inside a large roasting pan.

4 Transfer the roasting pan to the oven rack and then pour enough boiling water to come halfway up the side of the pie dish. Bake until the custard is set on the edges but still slightly loose in the center, about 1 hour. Transfer the roasting pan to a rack and then lift the pie dish from the water bath and set it on a rack to cool completely. Refrigerate the custard at least 4 hours or overnight.

5 To serve, invert a serving plate on top of the pie dish, and then flip the two together and allow the custard and its caramel sauce to fall onto the plate. Lift the orange slices from their syrup and cut each into 6 wedges. Cut the custard into wedges and then garnish each with some of the orange wedges.

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Fellowship of the Fire Pit

Zhang-Ji's Grilled Leg of Lamb restaurant,
Beijing, China, July 15, 2015

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MANDY LEE

I live in Beijing and have a food blog, so sometimes tourists contact me to get the pulse on the food scene here. One day, when an American reached out, I decided to take him to this always-packed hole-in-the-wall in a *hutong*—a little alleyway—near my house. It was the middle of July, and out on the street there was a roaring charcoal pit, manned by three shirtless cooks, and a handful of tables, each with a mini coal pit in the center. The restaurant specialized in lamb, and once the salt-rubbed legs had been cooked half-through by the staff, they brought one over to our table to finish, along with a ground-peanut dipping sauce. I'd also ordered some *liang cai*—cold dishes like boiled peanuts, bitter melon, and Sichuan pickled cabbage—to cut through the fatty meat, and we tore into everything, using long forks and knives so we wouldn't burn ourselves. Suddenly it didn't matter that I was sweating bullets; all I could think about was the lamb—no wonder the place was always packed. We were picking our way through our epic spread when a group of people at a nearby table introduced themselves and we all ended up chatting and sharing food for the rest of the evening. I guess there's just something about sitting in front of a fire pit that makes you reach out, forget to be embarrassed that you're sweating profusely, pass the lamb, and become friends.

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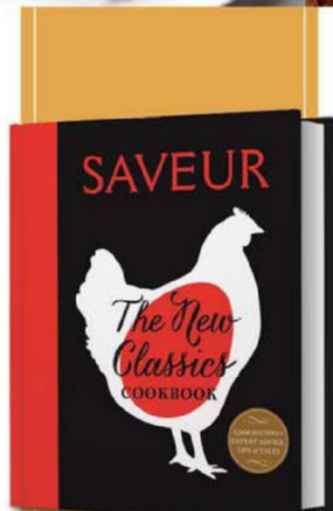
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